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Hot Spring

October 1996

A Journal of Commitment

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TAMIL STRUG
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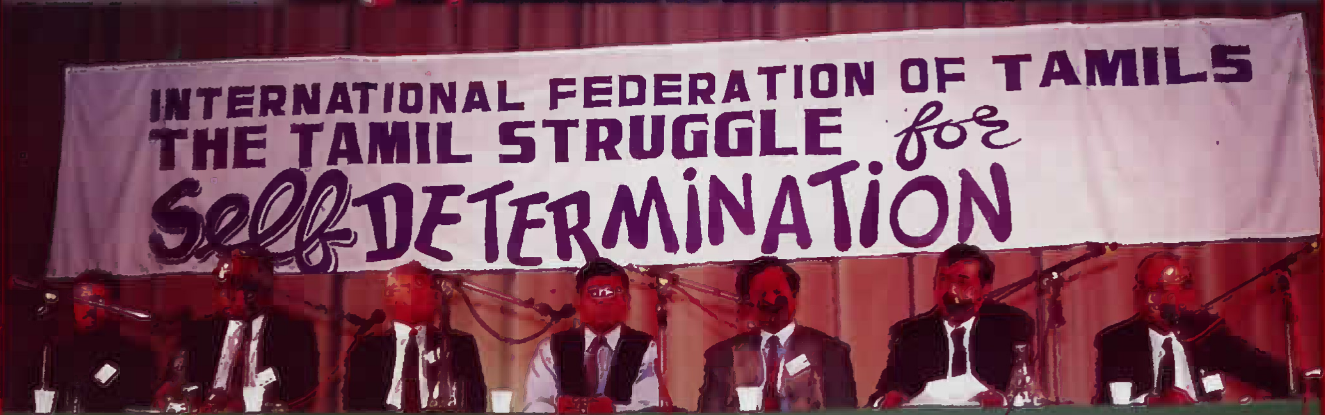
British Shadow Foreign Secretary
Mr. Derek Fatchett MP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LEGAL AID CASES UNDERTAKEN

Hot Spring
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Editor

S.Sivanayagam

Editorial Forwarding address

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chez A.Pushpalingham
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Comment

Sri Lanka takes on the U.N. Secretary-General!

The Sri Lankan government which has the habit of displaying its anger whenever the truth about the northeast of the island gets known, has done it again. This time the provocation was the U.N. Secretary General's report on the work of the Organisation in respect of various countries, dated August 1996.

It would be remembered that when U.N. Secretary General Dr.Boutros Boutros-Ghali made an appeal to U.N. agencies several months ago to help the 500,000 internally displaced non-combatant (Tamil) civilian population, the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister (believed to be a Tamil himself) got into a pique,disputed the figure given by the Secretary General and virtually questioned UN agencies interfering in humanitarian work. When the International Committee of the Red Cross revealed the truth about the bombing of the Navaly church and quoted eye witness accounts of the casualties (men, women and children) the same foreign Minister summoned the ICRC representative in Colombo and accused the organisation of exceeding its duties, and not informing the government before issuing the report. When the Medicines Sans Frontieres team in the North gave out the figures of casualties in the government's aerial bombing of the Nagercoil school, the government came out with a veiled threat against the organisation. When the Paris-based UNESCO head condemned the bombing of the school, the government sent him a stiff note questioning his credentials. In short, the Sri Lankan government's allergy towards TRUTH is so acute that for such a puny country it does not mind taking on anything international, whether it is the United Nations itself or the ICRC or UNESCO or MSF!

Now, what did the UN Secretary General's report say? This is the full text:-

"578. By the end of 1995, the number of people displaced internally by the armed conflict in Sri Lanka had increased to some 720,000. An additional 290,000 were considered to be economically affected by the conflict. The cessation of hostilities agreement, which had come into effect on 6 January 1995, ended on 19 April when government military facilities were attacked. The Government launched an offensive in October 1995, which resulted in the capture of the city of Jaffna, the capital of the Northern Province, and in a large-scale exodus of some 400,000 to 500,000 people, many of whom were already displaced, from Jaffna to welfare centres and makeshift arrangements with friends and relatives elsewhere in the Province. A large number of displaced and economically affected populations are also found in the Eastern Province and in districts bordering on the conflict zones.

"579. While the United Nations system has not received a formal appeal from the Government of Sri Lanka to assist in an accelerated relief effort, various agencies have been asked to continue the work undertaken previously. UNHCR has provided relief assistance to returned refugees and to displaced persons in welfare centres and has carried out small-scale community-based projects through established field offices in the conflict-affected areas. WFP has provided emergency food assistance since 1987 to some 55,000 displaced persons in welfare centres outside the conflict zones, and has been closely monitoring the food situation for the newly displaced inside the conflict area. UNICEF provides various relief items, including water and sanitation facilities, medical kits and education materials, and supports a community-based programme to help children affected by trauma and an education-for-conflict resolution programme in the school system.

580. UNDP had planned a programme for reconstruction and reconciliation but had to abandon it as the peace process was reversed. UNDP is providing institutional support to the Government's relief coordination efforts. The emergency situation is expected to continue and perhaps worsen as conflict continues and drought conditions add to the problems of displacement."

Thalif Deen reporting from the United Nations, says:-

Sri Lanka has protested to the United Nations for an "inaccurate and misleading report on the political situation in the north and the east."

In a letter to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Ambassador H.L.de Silva says, "It is a matter of regret that the Secretary-General's annual report released last week has caused "grave concern and dissatisfaction to the government of Sri Lanka."

In his report, Boutros-Ghali says the UN Development Programme (UNDP) "had planned a programme for reconstruction and reconciliation but had to abandon it as the peace process was reversed."

In his letter of protest, Ambassador de Silva says that while the institutional support of UNDP for the government's relief coordination is acknowledged, "it must be stressed that the government of Sri Lanka has not requested the intervention of UNDP or any other UN agency for a reconciliation programme, which, according to the Secretary-General's report, UNDP had planned."

Nobel Peace Prize for East Timor Activists

John Roosa, University of Wisconsin

The 1996 Nobel Peace prize was awarded to two East Timorese, Bishop Carlos Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta. In choosing a church leader and a political leader, the Nobel committee recognized the two main forces of the East Timorese resistance to Indonesia's 21-year occupation. The committee also sent a clear message to the Indonesian government that it should end its military repression and seek a negotiated solution.

Now that East Timor is in the spotlight, many people may wish to find out more about the situation there and about these two gentlemen. The press has covered only the most basic facts. There are many books and articles about East Timor, especially since 1975 when the Indonesian military began its occupation.

Jose Ramos-Horta has written a first-person account of the East Timorese struggle for self-determination: 'Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor' (Trenton, New Jersey: Red Sea Press, 1987), 207 pages.

Horta has said that this Nobel prize should be shared by his leader, Xanana Gusmao, who is now in a Jakarta prison. Gusmao led the guerilla resistance from the early 1980s until he was captured on November 20, 1992. The most recent interview with him appeared in 'The Guardian Weekly', Dec. 2, 1995 and was reprinted in 'The Nation' (New York) soon thereafter.

An article about Archbishop Belo appeared in the Asian edition of 'Reader's Digest', March 1996: "Hero for a Forgotten People" by Paul Raffaele.

The role of the Catholic church has been discussed by Robert Archer in his article "The Catholic Church in East Timor" in 'East Timor at the Crossroads: The Forging of a Nation', Peter Carey and G. Carter Bentley, eds., (London: Cassell, 1995).

The magazines 'Tapol' (Britain) and 'Inside Indonesia' (Australia) have covered the activities of both Belo and Horta over the years. The former is published by the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign in Britain. The founder-president of that organization is Carmel Budiardjo who is now touring the United States promoting her new book: Surviving Indonesia's Gulag (London: Cassell, 1996).

Archbishop Belo wrote a letter to the General Secretary of the United Nations on February 6, 1989 which reads in part: "The people of Timor must be allowed to express their views on their future through a plebescite. Hitherto the people have not been consulted. Others speak in the name of the people. Indonesia says that the people of East Timor have already chosen integration, but the people of East Timor themselves have never said this. Portugal wants time to solve the problem. And we continue to die as a people and as a nation."

U.S. ROLE IN SRI LANKA CRITICISED

A PRESS STATEMENT issued by CENPEACE, Malaysia states:-

"UNITED STATES SHOULD MEDIATE FOR PEACE WITH JUSTICE IN SRI LANKA, NOT TAKE SIDES.

CENPEACE is concerned about an AFP News Report on August 9 that the United States had begun giving military training to Sri Lankan troops and selling arms to the Sri Lankan Government.

According to the report, both the US and Sri Lankan Governments have confirmed that the US military is training Sri Lankan soldiers, but only in humanitarian work.

CENPEACE, voicing the feelings of all right-thinking people not only of Malaysia but all over the world who are informed of the true situation in Sri Lanka calls upon the government of the United States of America not to take any action that would escalate the present on-going civil war and aggravate the sufferings of the civilian population, especially the Tamils, who are caught in this conflict. This would run counter to US policies of human rights and humanitarian work. The US should, therefore, call upon the Sri Lankan Govemment to lift, with immediate effect, the economic blockade which that Government has put in place against the North. She should also call upon that government to allow international agencies such as the International Red Cross and Medicine Sans Frontiers to distribute such aid to the civilians independent of that government. Such action would conform with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions in conducting wars.

The present civil war in Sri Lanka has been precipitated by the rabid Sinhala racialist policies of that government about which the US Government is, no doubt, well-informed. It has strong resemblance to the American War of independence, for the Tamils are fighting for their rights as Tamils just as Americans fought for their rights.

In any case, the Tamils have the right of self-determination vested in the British Crown under the 1948 Soulbury Constitution and, if a peaceful exercise of that right is not available freely to determine their political future, then they have the right under United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 2625 and other international laws to exercise that right by war - and the international community is obliged to declare its neutrality in such a Civil War. Any other action by the international community such as in extension of their perceived national interests or hegemonism is in breach of international law and contrary to a just world order.

"Hidden agendas"

Regrettably the US Government is in breach of such international laws ever since it set up an Israeli interest section in its Embassy in Colombo which the present news report under reference further confirms. As the Super-Power in a Unipolar world the US should be seen to hold itself above such "hidden agendas" as is commonly known to be implemented by "banana republics." On the other hand, it should be seen as a bastion of the principles of its own lofty "Declaration of Independence" and the democratic principles for which Abraham Lincoln stood. It should bring pressure to bear on the Sri Lankan Government to allow the Tamil people freely to determine their political future by their right to self-determination without being hampered by its need for an alternative base for Subic Bay.

Both the Sri Lanka and the US Governments have now confirmed that the tragic armed conflict in Sri Lanka is no longer an internal affair of Sri Lanka and is in fact an humanitarian issue which needs urgent international attention and assistance.

FAN YEW TENG Executive Director of CENPEACE

The United States should mediate a just peace in Sri Lanka by calling on the Sri Lankan Government to return immediately to the negotiating table. The United States should tell the Sri Lankan Government that there can be no military solution to the conflict. Only a just political settlement can bring about a durable peace in that country."

JAFFNA Reports

JAFFNA VILLAGES ENCIRCLED

Giant embankments cutting across paddy fields and encircling entire villages have become a new feature in the landscape of the Jaffna Peninsula, as the Sri Lankan army of occupation digs in. Villages affected include Karaveddy, Achuvelli, Karanwai and Navalar Madathady. The embankments, fortified with anti-personnel mines presumably sowed to keep the Tamil liberation forces from infiltrating has severely disrupted farming.

ARMY OCCUPIES SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS

Several schools and hospitals have become military camps of the Sri Lankan army thereby severely disrupting education and heath care.

In Vadamarachy, the Point Pedro Methodist School, the Uduthiria Maha Vidyalayam and Melisanthi Sellapa Vidyasalai are now military camps. Another military camp has been established right next to Hartley College

In Thenmarachy, the Pallai Hospital, Pallai Maha Vidyalayam and Mirusivil mixed schools have become army camps.

Military harassments in Jaffna

WIDE SPREAD DISAPPEARANCES OF YOUTH

Young Tamils taken into custody by the Sri Lankan army are not seen any more. The army's mass arrests of youth are on a scale similar to those by the armed forces in the South in the late 1980's. during which over 60,000 people "disappeared". The army, in keeping with its past practices, has denied these arrests when confronted by parents.

145 men and 22 women arrested on 19 September in the village of Navatkuli and an unspecified number taken into custody from the suburb of Eachomoddai in Jaffna on the same day in cordon and search operations, are yet to be released. It is feared that they too have joined the ranks of the "disappeared"

EXAMINATION CENTRES TARGETED

In its sustained efforts to "beat the population into submission", the Sri Lankan armed forces have targeted examination centres during the month of August.

On 5 August, Sri Lankan Gunboats pounded the villages of Panagam, Vaddukoddai and Sithankerny just when the students were in the midst of sitting the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) examination. Students had to be evacuated from the hall when a shell exploded in the playground of the Vaddukoddai Hindu College. On 7 August, a military truck ploughed into a group of student cyclists on their way to the examination hall. A student, Thayanthi Kananathan (19) was killed on the spot. The others traumatised by the event had to be comforted and counselled before the examination began after an unavoidable delay.

COMPLETE BAN ON ALL FISHING

All fishing off the Vadamarachi coast has been banned, jeopardising the lives of Tamil families dependant on fishing. The ban has been imposed at the request of the Sri Lankan Armed forces who claim that at least 50,000 troops would otherwise be needed to maintain close surveillance of the coast. The ban is the latest in a series of bans of varying degrees imposed on Tamil fisherman over the last ten years.

WORSHIP DENIED

People under the age of forty-five have been banned from entering the premises of the Nallur Kandasamy Kovil during its annual Chariot (Ther) festival. Additionally, the daily participation has been restricted to 200 people a day. The festival usually attracts several thousands daily and has never before been disrupted in this manner. The ban has angered the people.

PRICES ESCALATE

Prices of food have hit new heights as a result of the severe restriction placed on the movement of products to and from the Jaffna Peninsula. These prices are said to be around two to four times the price of items in Colombo. Rice, is around Rs 80/= per kilo , Mutton around Rs 200/= and eggs which cost only Rs 2.50 in Colombo are hard to come by even at RS 15/=.

TYPHOID AND MALARIA ON THE INCREASE

The restrictions on medicine have given rise to a high incidence of Typhoid and Malaria-diseases which had been brought under control earlier. Of the 150 patients admitted to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital sixty-five were found to suffer from Malaria and the rest from Typhoid.

The Jaffna Teaching Hospital has

been denied equipment and drugs as a result of the supplies meant for the teaching hospital being taken over by the Sri Lankan military forces for their own use.

LAND MINES TAKE THEIR TOLL

Several people both young and old have become the victims of anti-personnel land mines sowed by the Sri Lankan forces occupying the Jaffna Peninsula. These includes eight-year old Velanthan Thavachelvan of Vithanayar lane Irupali who lost one of his legs when he stepped on a mine, and twenty-one year old Krishnaswamy Uthayakumar and a companion who were killed on 6 September when the bullock cart they were travelling in ran over a mine. On 19, September, the driver of a tractor was killed in Kopay when his tractor ran over a mine. Three people were injured in Kupilan when they stepped on mines planted by the Sri Lankan military. They were Subramanaim Sivakumaran (24), Kanthavan Vasiharan (29) and S. Ravichandran (26).

Vanni Reports

NELLUKULAM - A CONCENTRATION CAMP

Over a thousand Tamil refugees who had found their way into Vavuniya town are being held at the Nellukulam Kalimagal Vidyalayam under inhumane conditions. It is said the conditions are so bad that comparison to the concentration camps of Nazi Germany is more than justified. The camp is surrounded by barbed wire fences and the refugees are not permitted to leave the camp. Nor are visitors permitted. There are hardly any medical facilities.

INFANTS DIE DUE TO LACK OF MEDICINE

In the month of July alone 17 infants died due to non availability of essential drugs at the Mallavi hospital. The deaths have been the direct consequence of the Sri Lankan Government's policy of depriving the Tamil-controlled Vanni of essential medicine, in a sustained effort to beat the population into submission.

124 TAMIL YOUTH "DISAPPEAR"

The whereabouts of 124 Tamil youth (60 girls and 64 boys) detained by the Sri Lankan army at the Thandikulam crossing are not known. The youth were arrested on their way to the South and were taken to the Veppamkulam army camp located within the Thandikulam military complex.

HOSPITALS IN VANNI FACE SEVERE SHORTAGES

Hospitals in the Vanni face severe shortages of medicine as a consequence of the Sri Lankan Government's policy of deliberately restricting the supply of medicine to the Tamil-controlled areas. The problem has been compounded by the evacuation of Killinochi and the loss of the medical facilities of the hospital there.

This has placed additional strains on the smaller hospitals at Puthukudiyirippu, Mankulam and Akkrayan. According to Dr. Thiruchitambalam, officer-in-charge of the Mankulam hospital, his hospital is now forced to cope with 500 patients a day and is in no way equipped to meet this demand. He expects the problem to become much worse with the onset of the rainy season.

MULLAITIVU RETURNS TO NORMAL

The town of Mullaitivu now in Tamil hands is getting back to normal after a six year period during which the Sri Lankan army held sway having driven the entire population out. The town had then been converted into a massive military base.

Schools are expected to re-open by mid October. Several business establishments have sprung up and residents are back. Fishing, the town's main economic activity is poised to take off once again as Tamil families engaged in fishing have now returned. The fishing is expected to be a great help to the entire Vanni region deprived of food by the Sri Lankan Government.

MARTYRS REMEMBERED

Celebrations were held in the Mullaitivu district honouring Major Anbu, Major Keerthi and Captain Sevvanam, the "Black Tigers" whose successful attack on the Kankesanthurai harbour resulted in the sinking of several naval craft in September last year.

PEOPLE PROTEST ARMY

Batti & Trinco Reports

ATROCITIES

Villagers from Vavunativu and Pattipalai have staged a protest march against the army order to evacuate these villages. Sri Lankan Air Force helicopters dropped leaflets ordering the villagers to leave before a planned major army offensive to take these villages which are presently not under their control.

Tamils of Paduvankarai condemned the Sri Lankan armed forces indiscriminate shelling of their area and handed over a memorandum to the representative of the ICRC who was present at a public meeting, detailing the hardship faced by the population as a result of the shelling.

OVER A THOUSAND FAMILIES DISPLACED

Over one thousand families of the Nasivan Island in Batticaloa have fled fearing attacks by the Sri Lankan military. Earlier, civilians from Kayankerni, Mankerni and Kalodai fled the shelling by the Sri Lankan armed forces.

BATTICALOA HOSPITAL NEGLECTED, DOCTORS HARASSED

The Sri Lankan Government's policy of "beating the Tamils into submission" by depriving them of medicines has now been extended to the Batticaloa Hospital as large tracts of the Eastern Province have now come under Tamil control.

The Batticaloa General Hospital is a teaching hospital covering the region between Verugal and Amparai and as such it needs to maintain high standards. Instead, the Government has neglected to fill critical vacancies, restricted the supply of medicine and even refused to repair the hospital equipment. Doctors are often harassed by the army and have been forced to go all the way to Colombo to order medicine.

TAMILS TO EVACUATE LINGA NAGAR

The Sinhala Government Agent of Trincomalee has gone to extraordinary lengths to drive the Tamils out of Linga Nagar, a suburb of Trincomalee. H. D. Chandradasa, the Government Agent visited the Tamil suburb accompanied by military personnel and obtained signatures from the Tamil residents on blank pieces of paper. It is feared that these papers may be used to legitimise the forceful evacuation of the people.

UNOFFICIAL CURFEW DECLARED

The Tamil villagers of Anpuvalipuram, Selvanayakapuram, Thuvarankadu and Puliyankadu have been ordered by the Sri Lankan army to stay indoors daily between 8pm and 6pm. The army has threatened to shoot all those failing to comply with the order.

POLICE STATION ATTACKED

The LTTE forces attacked a police station at Thampalakamam and killed fifteen policemen. The LTTE lost three of its fighters in the gun battle.

LOCAL TAMIL LEADER CALLS ON YOUTH TO JOIN LTTE

The President of the Mutur Anna Mantram (named after Mr. C. N. Annadurai, a former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and a founding member of the DMK) has called on Tamil youth to join the LTTE to fight the oppression of the Sri Lankan armed forces. 1

THE SRI LANKAN ARMY's "CAPTURE" OF KILINOCHCHI AND "WITHDRAWAL" FROM POONERYN

The pull - out from the Pooneryn military complex in Jaffna by the Sri Lankan Government in the wake of its "capture" of Killinochi comes as no surprise. No doubt Sri Lankan army generals realise that capturing an objective is one thing but holding it is another.

The attack to take Killinochi was not motivated by any great strategic concerns but by a need to boost the sagging morale of an army humiliated at the hands of the Tamil rebel forces in late July. The "capture" of Killinochi was the Government's answer to the Mullaitivu debacle in which an entire garrison was wiped out. This crushing defeat at the hands of a force which the Government had claimed to have "marginalised" and reduced to a rabble was a huge embarrassment to the Government. The opposition was quick to make political capital out of the debacle accusing the government of duplicity and ineptitude. But more importantly it has caused severe upheavals within the army high command undermined the morale of the Government troops. Given the desertions of over 15,000 Sri Lankan soldiers within the last eighteen months alone, and the serious difficulties experienced in attracting new recruits, the Mullaitivu debacle could not have come at a worse time for the government. The attack had shattered all hopes of those who believed that President Kumaratunge could somehow marginalise the LTTE and impose a "solution" on the Tamil people. Voices had begun to be raised in the South that the precious lives of young Sinhalese were being sacrificed on the altar of the ambitions of high ranking army officers.

The most telling sign that morale had hit a new low was the bickering within the army high command. Rear Admiral Mohan Samaresekera was blamed for the failure to provide adequate naval support in Mullaitivu and Lieutenant General Rohan Daluwatte for the overall debacle. The consequence was Operation Sath Jaya launched to capture Killinochi and prove that the army still retained its striking capacity. But, in the end, it is the numbers which matter when it comes to holding what has been "captured" and hence the Government's withdrawal of troops from Pooneryn.

Does this mean that the Govern-

Jaffna: Mother, daughter, son and family friend "disappear"!

Mr.P.Joseph, MP for Batticaloa District has complained to President Chandrika Kumaratunga that a mother who went to an Army Sentry Point between Chundikuli and Kaithady with three others looking for her teenaged daughter reported to have been arrested by the army, has disappeared with the others.

Mr. Joseph has requested the President to order an inquiry into the matter, and states in his letter:

"Miss. Krishanthy Kumarasamy, 18 years old, residing at "Kumaralayam" Kaithady South, Kaithady, Jaffna was taken into custody by the army at an Army Sentry point between Chundikuli and Kaithady on Saturday 07.09.1996 around 10.30 a.m. She was arrested while returning home after answering her G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Chemistry examination paper from the examination hall established in Chundikuli Girls' School, Jaffna.

"As the daughter had not returned home for lunch, the mother Mrs. Rasammah Kumarasamy, Deputy Principal attached to Muthukumarasamy Maha Vidyalayam Kaithady, Jaffna had gone in search of her daughter along with her son Pranaban Kumarasamy, 16 years old, a student of St. John's College, Jaffna and Kirupakaran Sithamparam, aged 35, a peon attached to the MPCS, Kaithady. On inquiries from others the mother was informed that her daughter was arrested by the army at the Army Sentry point. Thereafter, the mother had proceeded to the Army Sentry point along with her son Pranaban and the other Kirupaharan Sithamparam. The time of their reaching the Army Sentry point is said to be between 4.30 and 5.00 p.m. It appears that they too have been taken into custody by the army in the Sentry point.

"The relatives when they heard of the arrest have gone to the Army Sentry point next morning and inquired as to what had happened to all these four persons. The army at the Sentry point had totally denied taking any of them into custody.

"It is almost one week since they are taken into custody. There are eye witnesses to the arrest. The denial of the army arresting any one of them causes alarm and suspicion that these four persons have `disappeared' while in custody of the army.

"According to information given to me by many residents in Jaffna, more than two hundred arrests have taken place during the past three weeks in Jaffna which includes many `disappearances'.

Courtesy: 'The Island'

கிளி/கிளிநொச்சி இந்துக் கல்லூரி
KN/KILINOCHCHI HINDU COLLEGE

Troops in Kilinochchi occupy a school building

ment has scored a decisive victory and achieved its stated objective of killing as many as possible? It cannot be so. Even a superficial analysis will show that the LTTE has acted just as most small forces do when confronted with a broad-based frontal assault - that is, taken to the hinterland to regroup. But, unlike the Jaffna Peninsula which is a built-up area, the Vanni is an area suited to the kind of warfare which the LTTE is now bound to engage in on regrouping. It will soon be evident that the Sri Lankan troops have marched into a quagmire from which they will find it extremely difficult to get out. It is inevitable that additional troops to fight their way out of this quagmire will have to come from the Peninsula. This action is bound to leave the Peninsula wide open to take over by the LTTE - once again!

A Government attempt to move further into the Vanni could be reasonably anticipated, given that that is where the LTTE is. The name of the game, after all, is - body count. That is, to weaken the enemy by maximising the numbers killed! And one cannot kill the enemy until you reach him!

How would the LTTE respond to such a move by the Government? "Come into my parlour, said the spider to the fly"

An Analysis by Ana Pararajasingham

Tigers deplore Tamil refugees' plight

COLOMBO, Oct 12 (Reuter) - Separatist Tamil rebels on Saturday accused the Sri Lankan government of not providing food to northern minority Tamil civilians displaced by war, but aid workers said medicine was more urgently required.

Hundreds of thousands of Tamils, displaced by the army's push last month to capture the rebel northern stronghold of Kilinochchi, faced starvation as the government refused to distribute food and other aid to them, a rebel statement said.

``Even rudimentary help such as dry rations had not been given to them," said the statement from Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who are fighting for an independent Tamil homeland in the island's north and east.

``Both governmental and non-governmental organisations have totally ignored them," the statement, faxed to Reuters, added.

Government officials were not immediately available for comment but the military said there was no change in the policy of sending regular food trucks to affected areas.

``We feel the LTTE is trying to pressure the NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to pressure the government to get more food into the areas," a military spokesman told Reuters.

Western aid workers denied starvation claims but noted undernutrition among refugees.

``We see undernutrition, but unlike malnutrition it has no serious effect on their health," said Frances Stevenson, coordinator for the French aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres.

``We're working in several hospitals in the area, but we actually have observed no malnutrition," Stevenson told Reuters.

Other aid workers said the government did not consider as refugees nearly half of an estimated 400,000 people who fled their homes to the rebel territory of the Vanni since last March.

Most of them are Tamils who fled the northernmost Jaffna peninsula before the army captured the peninsula in April. Jaffna had been ruled by the rebels for nearly a decade.

``It seems that the government feels these people had no valid reasons to flee and hence are not entitled to food rations," said an aid worker who declined to be identified. ``But many are living with friends or relatives and seem not to be having problems finding food."

Stevenson said she was more concerned about the shortage of medicine, which was likely to affect displaced people as monsoon rains arrive in the Vanni.

``The government is still not granting permission for medical supplies to come freely into the region. Therefore all basic essential drugs, from antibiotics to painkillers, are in short supply," she said.

She said malaria was on the rise and would develop into an epidemic if anti-malaria drugs were not made available soon.

The military said it has already given clearance for medicines for the last quarter to be shipped to the Wanni.

``But about medicines we're a bit more cautious since we know that wounded rebels mix with civilians to seek treatment at medical centres," a military spokesman told Reuters.

``Civilians getting medical treatment is fine, but LTTE cadres getting treatment can pose a problem for us," he said.

Refugee boat capsizes: 14 drowned

A boat carrying fleeing Tamil refugees from the war-torn Northern Sri Lanka to reach India has ended up in tragedy when the boat overturned within a quarter mile from the seashore drowning 14 people including a 10 month old baby. The rest have been saved by boats rushe to the scene.

The ill-fated boat had set-out from Vallipadu in Mannar before facing the disaster around 7pm on 14th October.

Mrs. Ratnasingam, who escaped death, is from the army-occupied Uduvil in Valigamam and she said that she decided to go to India in order to attend to her children's health problems and education. In the boat-tragedy, however, she has lost all her money, clothes and important documents. Although her children were saved she was now in penury with nothing to live on. She cited, lack of food and medicine as the main reason for the flight of refugees.

The refugees' attempts to escape into South India have been partly caused by the government-imposed 'unofficial' ban on food and medicines reaching Tamil areas, on top of the indiscriminate shelling and bombings of civilian targets by the military.

ANURA DRUMS UP FOREIGN SUPPORT AGAINST CHANDRIKA

COLOMBO, Sept 25 (AFP) - Sri Lanka's main opposition Wednesday held a meeting with diplomats from 30 countries to mount pressure on the government to halt political violence that has killed eight people since the weekend.

Opposition legislator Anura Bandaranaike, the estranged brother of President Chandrika Kumaratunga, briefed diplomats on the latest violence which claimed two more lives Wednesday in the eastern town of Polonnaruwa.

Ambassadors of Bangladesh, Cuba, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan and Russia were present at the UNP meeting while other countries were represented by their other diplomatic staff, a UNP spokesman said.

The United National Party (UNP) said it feared more attacks against its supporters from government activists and urged foreign organisations to pressure the President to take action against those responsible.

"No effective action is taken by the government to stop this wave of political violence and there will come a time when others will also resort to violence," UNP leader and former premier Ranil Wickremesinghe said.

Six UNP activists were shot dead by gunmen believed to be government supporters in three separate incidents over the weekend at the district of Gampaha, the home constituency of President Kumaratunga.

The President's estranged brother has said Kumaratunga was instigating the violence by not condemning the killings.

"These acts of violence are encouraged by none other than the head of state herself," Bandaranaike said adding that he was lucky not to have been hit when gunmen opened fire at an opposition motorcade on Friday.

The UNP told diplomats that they will have to reconsider supporting the government on the crucial political reform package aimed at ending the country's drawn out Tamil separatist war in view of the attacks.

President Kumaratunga's People's Alliance (PA) has a one-seat majority in the 225-member national parliament and requires the support of the UNP to push through a political package to end the separatist war.

Tamil politicians said the widening rift between the two main Sinhalese parties, the PA and the UNP, was a death blow to a political reform package being discussed by a parliamentary panel.

250,000 DISPLACED IN THE VANNI NEED YOUR HELP

The destruction of the Killinochchi hospital, the only major public hospital in the Vanni area, during the intense shelling by the Sri Lankan military as part of "Operation Sath Jaya", has caused severe shortage in medical facilities available for the residents in the Vanni region in Northern Sri Lanka. Currently, people of Vanni seek medical assistance in smaller regional medical centres and both Mallavi, Tharmapuram and Akkarayan rural hospitals have become important centres for treatment of Tamil patients. Fast declining medical supplies and drugs, and the lack of even the barest minimum facilities have already stretched the limits of these rural medical centres. Mallavi hospital, which has 200 beds treats more than 800 patients a day and many seriously ill patients are treated as out-patients despite needing in-house treatment.

Most of the 250,000 displaced Tamils from Killinochchi, after the Government offensive, are still living along road sides and in jungles and are undergoing extreme suffering due to shortages in drinking water and water for washing. Diseases associated with poor sanitation and the use of unclean water are rapidly on the increase. Malaria, jaundice and septicaemia are spreading rapidly among the refugees. Embargo on medical supplies and restrictions on food convoys by the military at Vavuniya has further exacerbated the medical and health crisis.

Urgent funding is required to reach medical supplies and drinking water facilities to the displaced people in the Vanni area. The Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) is seeking urgent assistance from well wishers and organisations to improve the medical needs and provide drinking water facilities for the Tamil people in Northern Vanni area of Sri Lanka. Please contact the local TRO office for further information.

International Co-ordinating Office
Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation
P O Box 4254, Knox City,
Victoria 3152, Australia
Phone/Fax : (61 3) 9800 3899

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

on

"The Tamil Struggle for Self-Determination"

(held on 26 & 27 September '96)

P.Khabra M.P. inaugurated the conference by lighting traditional lamp

The International Conference organised by the International federation of Tamils, was held in London at Ealing town Hall on the theme, " The Tamil Struggle for Self Determination". It was held mainly to call upon all Sri Lankan expatriates and the International Community to:

a) support the just and legitimate struggle of the Tamil people living within historically defined territory in Sri Lanka,

b) recognise the right of self-determination of the Tamil people,

c) impress upon the Sri Lankan Government to de-escalate its military aggression by withdrawing its troops from occupied Tamil territories and by lifting the embargo on food, medicine and media in order to create conducive conditions to initiate meaningful talks between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to find a peaceful and lasting settlement to the armed conflict and

d) engage in meaningful talks towards recognising the just rights of the Tamil people.

The conference was addressed by a team of delegates from the UK, El-Salvador, Sri Lanka, South India and South Africa. The speakers from the UK were Hon. Derek Fatchett MP (Shadow foreign Secretary), Hon. Robert Hughes MP (Conservative), Hon. P. Khabra MP (Labour), Hon. Christine Oddy MEP (Labour), Mr. Barry Gardiner (Labour Party candidate for Brent North), Mrs. Lata Patel (Mayor of London Borough of Brent), Dr. Surya Subedi (Snr. Lecturer, University of Hull), Mr. Vasantha Raja (Former Chairman, Sri Lanka National TV - Rupavahini and Former Presenter of BBC Sinhala Service), Miss. R. Madhura (HURT- Human Rights for Tamils), Mr. Adrian Wijemanne (Author - `War and Peace in Post-colonial Ceylon); Dr. S. Ramadas (Founder, Pattali Makkal Kadchi - India) and Prof. Theeran, MLA (Leader, Pattali Makkal Kadchi-India); Mr. Sigfrido Reyes (Executive Secretary, Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, El-Salvador); Mr. Gopal Veerabadhran (PASLO-South Africa); and Dr. Vickramabahu Karunaratna (Nava Sama Samaja Party Leader - Sri Lanka).

ATIONAL FEDERATION OF TAMILS
TAMIL STRUGGLE for
DETERMINATIC

(From left to right): Prof. Theeran, Dr.Arjuna Sittampalam and Mayor of Brent Mrs.Lata Patel who opened the second day session

The conference was well attended by people from all walks of life. The views expressed by the delegates were centred on the plight of the Eelam Tamils and the condemnation of the Sri Lanka government's ongoing military operations under the pretext of press censorship and emergency rule.

We quote excerpts from some of the delegates. Hon. Derek Fatchett MP (Shadow Foreign Minister) "....there has to be a just political solution. The only people who can resolve a conflict are the parties to the conflict themselves. I can see that there has to be recognition of the legitimate wishes of the Tamil people and the wish for autonomy on the part of the Tamil people....

" We would see it as our obligation as well as our right to further human rights for all and therefore to criticise any actions that are a violation of any human rights.

" ... we recognise alongside the military conflict that exists, literally hundreds of thousands of people are in need of humanitarian support. I'm already in opposition, been asking the British Government to book whatever pressure it can on the Sri Lankan Government to ensure that legitimate aid gets through to those who need legitimate aid. ..."

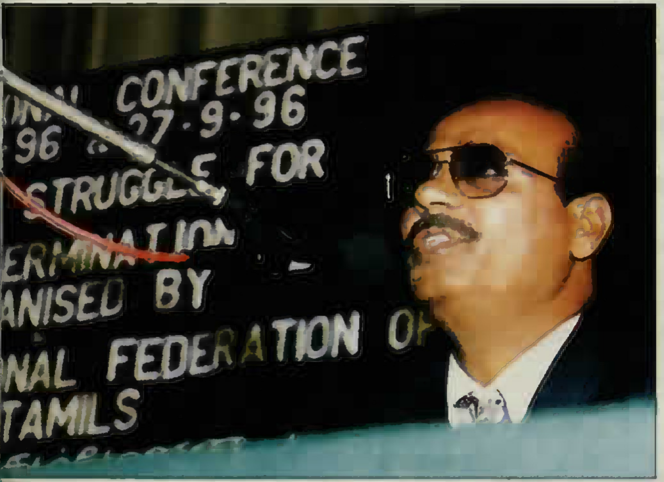
Mr. Barry Gardiner
Labour Candidate:

" The war in Sri Lanka must be publicised, I commend the organisers of this conference and pledge that I will do all in my power to keep international attention focused on what the Tamil people are suffering.

Mr.Barry Gardiner

"The question of International Humanitarian relief and the Sri Lankan Government's aid blockade must be constantly highlighted. Economic pressure I believe should be brought there to resolve this issue.

"The question of the supply of military hardware to resume such as Sri Lanka must be stopped and Britain's role as a potential third party mediator with the historical and moral responsibility must be promoted."



Dr.S.Ramadas

Hon. Robert Hughes MP:

" ..... there is a tendency through ignorance to assume that the Tamil Tigers are simply a terrorist organisation ..... " " ... rather than being terrorists in my view, they are fighters trying to protect their homes, wives and their children ..." "Let's get the television cameras in there. Let's see what's going on. Let's see whose word is right and wrong. Let's see whether you can believe what the Sri Lankan Government authorities are telling us." "...let's have the evidence in front of the television cameras and by unbiased journalists. And let's see what's the effect is of the denial of the medicines."

Dr. Ramdas and Prof. Theeran emphasised the point that the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Kalaignar Karunanithy has already spoken to the Central Government about the plight of the Eelam Tamils and the Tamil Refugees. They said that they would talk again to Kalaignar put pressure on the Foreign Minister, Mr. Gujral to intervene in this matter to find a just and lasting solution to the Tamil problem which will meet the demands and aspirations of the Eelam Tamils.

Mr. Sigfrido Reyes in his speech said, " ... peace may be lasting and firm only if it is based upon justice. And justice in this situation means that Sri Lanka Government finally recognises the right of Tamil people to choose what kind of state they want to live in, even if their decision favours an independent state. Peace must be based upon the right to each people to practice their own values, culture, language and traditions, with a limit not more than that accepted by the international community."

Dr. Vickramabahu Karunaratne

The conference from the beginning to the end was structured well and the audience were keenly taking notes and their involvement was reflected during the panel discussion. I

"Denying medicine to dying Tamil children is crime against humanity"

British MP calls for world-wide condemnation

Hon.Robert Hughes M.P., Harrow West, former Minister of Public Service, speaking at the London Conference said:

Thank you very much indeed. It's an enormous pleasure to be here and thank you for inviting me to speak at this very important conference. I would start off by making it clear that I am not nor do I claim to be an expert about Sri Lanka. I've never been to Sri Lanka and I would like to but my interest comes from a different route. My interest comes from my friends, parents of my children's friends at school and from constituents who've been to see me that I have met with either formally or socially and it's the desperation with which they express their fears about their relatives back in Sri Lanka and I guess that desperation, that daily fear about what might be happening to your loved ones and friends but back in Sri Lanka is something that probably you all have in common in this hall today. It is not something that anyone who is a representative politician of any party should or could ignore and so that's why I started to get interested in what's going on in Sri Lanka. And I think the perception of what's going on is quite wrong.

Christine, when she was speaking talked about the perception of the Tigers as pursuing a terrorist organisation and that is one of the problems. That there is a tendency through ignorance to assume that the Tamil Tigers are simply a terrorist organisation in the same way as the IRA or anybody else or they're apologists.

When rather than being terrorists in my view, in my judgement that they are fighters trying to protect their homes, wives and their children. And they should be judged in no way differently from the people in Israel who fought like lions sometimes outnumbered 25:1 because they knew that if

CONFERENCE RESOLUTION

The Conference Resolves:

1 From ancient times the two Peoples, the Sinhalese people and the Tamil people have inhabited the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), having distinct languages, religions, culture, customs of their own and clearly demarcated geographic territories. The Sinhalese people and the Tamil people are by any and every test two distinct nations.

2 Since 1948, all attempts by the Tamil people to live with the Sinhalese people on the basis of the right of self determination and equality was thwarted brutally by the successive Sinhalese governments. Having exhausted all avenues for peaceful coexistence, the Tamil people exercising their free will, gave their overwhelming democratic mandate, to establish sovereignty in the Tamil territories in the general elections of 1977, which took the character of a referendum.

3 The military occupation of Tamil territories and oppression of the Tamil people who seek to exercise their right of self determination and to live as equals, is violation of Internationally accepted norms, democratic principles and humanitarian Laws. The armed struggle arose to defend the Tamil people against intolerable national oppression and a savage form of state terrorism, and is therefore just and lawful.

4 The Tamil national conflict in Sri Lanka requires a political and not a military solution. The military aggression on Tamil people under the slogan of "war for peace" by the Sri Lankan government is immoral, inhumane and unacceptable. This war has resulted in immense human tragedy, gross violation of democratic and human rights and economic decline of Sri Lanka as a whole.

5 This conference wishes to highlight the plight of the Tamil people in the Jaffna peninsula, the Vanni and the Eastern districts. By denying the Tamil people of Vanni area the very essential food and medical supplies needed for minimum existence, the government of Sri Lanka is using the embargo on food and medical supplies as a weapon of war. The People living in areas under the army control are treated like prisoners in an open camp. This conference appeals for free media access into the affected north-eastern war torn areas and for the urgent and independent relief and rehabilitation

they didn't, their children in Tel Aviv and Hyfa would be killed by the Syrian Army if they let them get through. And let's be quite clear that the behaviour of the Sri Lankan government over a long period has been an absolute disgrace and let's just take a microcosm of it, let's just look at this could be regarded as trivial but again I suspect that the people in this hall know exactly what I am talking about.

Let's look at the way the Tamil people are treated. When they go to the Sri Lankan High Commission trying to get a passport, visa or anything else! Ignored, rude to let us not reply to. I've written and I've had assurances from the High Commissioner that letters of mine have been passed on back to Colombo and that my constituents will receive the visas. Do they hell receive the visas? They are stuck because the High Commission in London can't be bothered to represent the people who come from Sri Lanka who are Tamils. And trivial in one sense that might be compared with the war that has been prosecuted but it gives you a clear indication of the attitude of one community in Sri Lanka to the other. I think that this is a problem that the Common Wealth should grasp. I hear what Christine says about the United Nations. The United Nations is I guess is patchy. I have to say that whatever work was done by the United Nations in El- Salvador is no co-incidence that the guerrilla fighters in El-Salvador decided they would give up. When the Soviet Union collapsed and they hadn't got any money to buy arms any more. I mean that is no co-incidence at all. So I don't think we should overestimate the power of the United Nations. But here perhaps is something that the Commonwealth can do. I mean I was second I have to say reading reports that are Commonwealth heads of government conference when quite rightly they castigated Nigeria, quite rightly they suspended Nigeria from the Commonwealth. It is right to condemn Nigeria the way Nigeria treats its own people and the way they have treated journalists and the disgraceful executions that have gone on. **But should Sri Lanka be sitting in judgement about Nigeria?** And what I'd like to see is the Commonwealth turning its attention to that country and there are three demands that I have and they broadly echo what Christine was saying because plainly there are no party differences in this country about this. This is a problem that has to be grasped whatever the government is and whoever we are. I mean the first one is that she said - free movement for the press and television.

Let's get the television cameras in there. Let's see what's going on. Let's see whose word is right and wrong. Let's see whether you can believe what the Sri Lankan government authorities are telling us is going on. I think we all know the answer to that. But let's have the evidence in front of the television cameras and by unbiased journalists. And let's see what's the effect is of the denial of the medicines. **I mean people are dying were reported on Sun Rise Radio yesterday for the wants of medicines. And I am not criticising Christine, she was merely reporting the fact of what the Sri Lankan government was saying but denying medicines to children for military reasons; that is against the Geneva Convention, it is something that Sadam Hussein may be accused of but the Sri Lankan government does not yet stand for the crimes; denying medicines to children who are dying as a result of it is something the world as a whole should and must condemn.**

And so it's here I'm jumping slightly forward to in what I want to say but here is something that where the British government I think can play a part and it is something that I have once discussed with Linda Chalker, the Overseas Aids Minister and I assure you I will be discussing with her again before parliament resumes. And that's the very simple matter that aid that is designed to go to the Tamil population should go to the Tamil population and not be channelled through the Sri Lankan government where it is diverted, and probably sold for profit. The fact is the people who need it aren't getting it. And I do think that the world community either acting in concert or individ-

work by Governmental and non Governmental Humanitarian Organisations.

6 This conference strongly believes that a lasting solution to the Tamil national conflict can only be reached on a voluntary basis and all the efforts by the government to impose its own solution by force or aggression will only aggravate the situation. Therefore in order for Peace initiatives to succeed, conducive condition should be created. This conference is firmly of the view that the Sri Lankan army must withdraw from Tamil areas occupied for the purpose of aggression in order to create conditions of normalcy, that will pave the way for the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to enter into negotiations without preconditions, with the help of a mutually acceptable third party.

ual countries acting unilaterally could put some of that right by making sure that the aid goes to where the aid is needed and perhaps one of the things I wanted to discuss with Foreign Office Minister is the way in which perhaps some of the extremely well formed Tamil population in this country could inform the British government privately about just how that aid could get to where that aid is needed. I won't ask you to discuss that today.

The third thing is the International observers. It has to be headed by somebody and Mary Robinson is of course a respected figure as Christine Oddy indicated but I want real observers in there. I want people who've got their own armed guards with them, the SAS if necessary. I want people who can travel freely around Sri Lanka and see what's going on and report it back to the International Community. So the three demands - the press and the television in, the food the medicines and the shelter going to where they should go and thirdly that the International Community observers with free movement should be allowed into every part of Sri Lanka.

And I just want to say one thing about the British government's stance. I don't expect nor am I looking for a publicly different stance from the British government. I understand the whole business of diplomacy. I understand that they want to keep everybody in play and doubtless those of you of my constituents are written or representatives who've written to their own MPs who have seen the standard answers from the Foreign Office Ministers about keeping all sides in play, I don't criticise these answers. I understand them. That the British Government must be there to be able to talk to both sides and try to bring both sides together. Of course that is right. The question is what is being said in the meetings. What's being said behind closed doors, I mean are they getting the same Riot Act read to them as the South African government used to particularly by Linda Chalker and some of the bankrupt governments in the front line states used to get the Riot Act read to them by Linda Chalker. Never publicised but we all know and they have been gracious enough to admit that she came there and told them the blunt truth. Well, I hope that British Ministers are telling the blunt truth to Sri Lankan Ministers when they meet them in private and that's what I'm going to be asking them to do when I meet with British Government Ministers.

And lastly I simply want to say this that things are getting urgent. Your conference is well timed and I suppose actually to be fair it'd be well timed whenever you had it. But yesterday last night we had the news of the new bombardment of Tamil positions which started yesterday. And of course the news that substantial numbers of young people are dying, young girls are disappearing being taken for the reasons that young girls in wars tend to be taken. and their families when they complaining are disappearing as well. And of course the many refugees that are going to India - I gather 2,000 last month. The army is gaining ground in Sri Lanka. Although they are losing many soldiers and so the war is finally balanced but many many thousands of people many of your relatives and friends are suffering on a day by day basis. I regard this an urgent matter and it's something that I'll discuss as a matter of urgency with the relevant government ministers when I'm able to meet them at length at our party conference in Bournemouth. When I meet them at our conference that's what I'll be discussing with them. I hope we can get some movement on this and start to allay your concerns and your concerns I know will only be allayed when the reality starts to be different in Sri Lanka we are able to stop the dreadful slaughter, bloodshed and depravation that is going on there day by day and I'll do what I can.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
26-9-96 & 27-9-96
'THE TAMIL STRUGGLE FOR
SELF DETERMINATION'
ORGANISED BY
THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
TAMILS
சர்வதேசத்தமிழர் சம்மேளன மாநாடு

(From left to right): Miss.Madhura Rasaratnam, Mr.Robert Hughes MP, Mr.C.Sithamparapillai and Ms. Christine Oddy MEP

The Tamil struggle evokes world-wide admiration, says El Salvador delegate

Mr.S.Reyes of El Salvador speaking at the Conference said:-

Dear friends,

I want to express my gratitude for having the invaluable opportunity to address this International Conference on Tamil national problem. I especially wish to give my deep thanks to all the organisers and the sponsors of this relevant event.

From this tribune let me share with you the feelings of solidarity and admiration that I, my party and my people have, toward the heroic and brave struggle of the Tamil people for its legitimate right to self-determination.

I am coming from El Salvador, one of the smallest countries in the American continent. I do represent a political party: the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front. Until 1992 our Front was a political and military organisation. Then we transformed ourselves into a political structure. No matter the fact that a short time ago we were performing the role of a classic guerrilla force, fighting the US backed local army, nowadays we are the main opposition party in El Salvador, with a significant quota in both the national and the regional parliaments, and also ruling many important cities along the country.

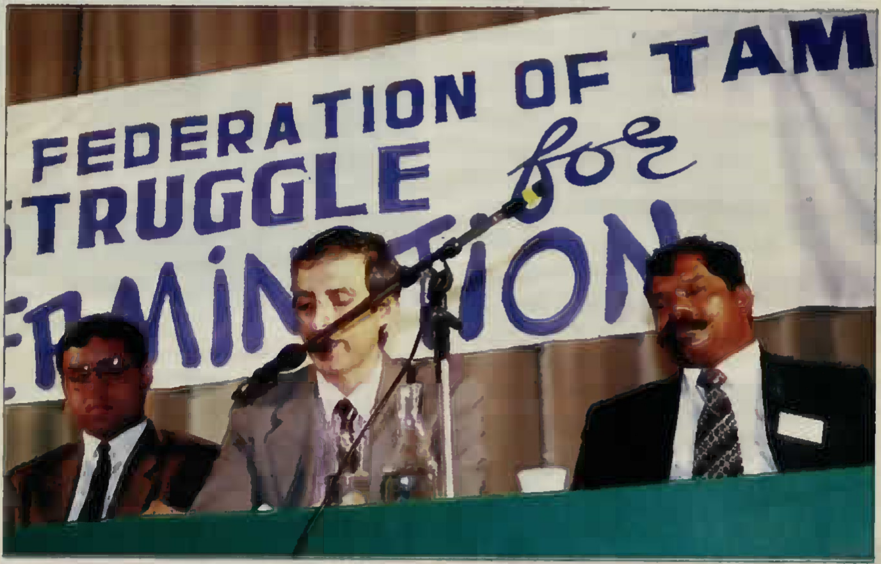
Prior to talk about my thinking on the current situation the Tamil people is facing, let me tell you something about the recent history of my own country.

Until relatively a short time ago the people of El Salvador had to bear the rule of an opprobrious and bloody military dictatorship. Since 1931 the dictatorship of generals and colonels governed the country, closing any space to democratic participation of our citizens. Under the shadow of this dictatorship an oligarquic minority saw how its wealth increased more and more, meanwhile the vast majority of our people laid in poverty, illness, illiteracy and had no chance for bettering its standard of life. I must say that unfortunately this military regime was always tolerated and supported by the US administrations. Americans trained the local army and the security forces, and also gave a strong financial, economic and moral support to the unpopular governments that ruled the country along various decades.

The pro-democratic committed sectors made large foolhardy attempts to open ways to the people's participation and emancipation. Political parties were created following this intentions. Many social organisations, such as trade unions and farmers associations, were developed. Frequently those parties were participating in elections, but once and again fraud and imposition aborted any possibility of democratisation. For the military, elections were just an appearances play for keeping a face of openness and legitimacy.

In 1972 and then in 1977 the political opposition won the general elections, but one more time the victory was denied by the military regime. At that moment a broad persecution began against the democratic parties. Human rights abuses rapidly increased, hundreds of opposition activists were murdered or simply disappeared in the hands of the so-called "death squads", inspired in a furious anti- Communist ideology. Those who were able to avoid repression were compelled to leave the country or quickly go underground. Even the religious leadership was on the focus of that dirty war. In March 1980 the world opinion was shocked by the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero, the Roman Catholic Church leader. He was killed because of his preaching demanded an immediate stop to repression.

In such conditions armed struggle remained the only way to achieve freedom and justice, fighting an unpopular army which became the hangman of its own people.



(From left to right): Dr.Surya Subedi, Mr.Sigfrido Reyes and Mr.Gopal Veerabadhran

That's the way our Front was born, adopting the name of a legendary Salvadoran hero, who led the opposition to the military when they seized power in 1931. Five left political organisations, which separately were organising resistance to military decide to combine their forces and experience and upgrade the level of the armed actions against the dictatorship.

In the very beginning we had no weapons neither financial resources. We began defending the people and ourselves with small guns and homemade explosive devices. Our thinking at that time was resisting and move forward step by step, capturing more powerful weapons during the battles against the enemy troops. Everywhere people were coming to join the Front, desperately trying to escape away from repression. In those days frequently we had 5 or more combatants and scarcely 1 gun for getting them armed.

By the other hand, the government army was being heavily armed by the Reagan administration. Putting into practice the tactics they developed in Vietnam war the American military advisers turned the local army in the main piece of the so-called "low intensity conflict", designed to isolate guerrilla forces from their logistical, political and intelligence bases: the people.

Step by step we learned the lessons of the war, gaining a lot of experience in the first combats. Soon we were able to give tremendous strikes to an army, which overwhelmly surpassed us in terms of soldiers and fire power. Our struggle inspired the admiration of many honest people around the world and sooner than later international solidarity started to provide enormous moral and material support. Hundreds of internationalist volunteers came to our homeland and fought together with us. Many of them lay in our soil today.

Nevertheless, when we enlarge our military power and wide zones of our country were liberated by our forces we took into account that for a national liberation front the main is not the military power, but the confidence of the people we say we are defending. To be in touch with the people, listen to their advises, identify ourselves with the people's aspirations, take seriously their opinions: that's the key for winning a national liberation struggle.

We always must remind that for our struggle being a just struggle its imperative that our goals match with those of the people we are willing to represent. Remembering the experience we lived I must say: when we separated ourselves from the people's will, we were badly defeated. When we caught the feelings of the people, we achieved tremendous victories.

A section of the audience

The war in El Salvador lasted almost 12 years. More than 70 thousand people were killed. About 5 thousand were disappeared by the dead squads and till this day their relatives are claiming for them. From a total population of about 6 millions more than a million had to leave the country, emigrating to United States, Canada, Australia, Europe and to the neighbour countries in Latin America. Dozens of villages and towns were completely destroyed by air bombings and artillery attacks.

By the end of the 80's there was a virtual strategic stalemate in El Salvador's civil war. We realised time for negotiations has come and launched a world-wide political offensive to open the negotiating table and bringing the government to a serious effort to put an end to the war. Our initiative was backed by many governments around the world. The same United Nations Secretary General energetically held the peace process. In January 1992, under the sponsorship of the UN organisation the FMLN and the Salvadoran government reached a political agreement to finally end the civil war.

From our point of view the Peace accords became a major political victory for our people. In practice the political system designed by the military along 60 years was dissembled. The armed forces were reduced and those elements blamed because of serious human rights violations were purged. At the same time the Constitution was reformed, looking to close any chance for army to become the holder of political power. In the field of military concepts the national security doctrine, proper for the cold war age, was officially abandoned and it was replaced by a new human rights oriented doctrine. The former security forces were disbanded and on its place was created a new absolutely professional civil police corp. The judiciary system was judges. The electoral system was deeply transformed, opening for the first time in our recent history the doors for unrestricted participation of all political sectors, no matter their ideological orientation.

Given the history of our country, and particularly the brutal features of the military dictatorship, we proudly affirm the Peace Accords mean for our homeland a true Democratic Revolution, the most important historical event since we got political independence from Spain in 1821.

At this point, perhaps you're asking yourselves, why do I relate all this story? Certainly, your country and mine are quite different. We have very distinct origins, our cultures and traditions have so little in common. Nevertheless, and I think you agree with me, a more detailed analysis will show important similarities for our both countries in the present century.

First of all our countries suffered or are suffering nowadays the terrible consequences of a civil war, with civilian population being the target of a genocidal army. In both cases we shall find the roots of the conflict in the attempts to deny to the people its legitimate rights to self- determination, freedom, justice and social progress. We had no other choice than take the arms and defend our people against a brutal aggression.

Until relatively a short time Sri Lanka was known all over the world as an exotic island, plenty of tea and coconut plantations, with sandy warm beaches and precious stones laying under the soil. For many of us your country was the Ceylon of the ancient Portuguese navigators, the land of magic and spices.

Actually the reality overwhelms the worse of the predictions. Thousands of people, men and women, elders and children, are on the focus of a cruel army, which pay little attention on the international law regarding human rights respect. The struggle of the Tamil people for its life and self-determination is raising a lot of admiration around the world. We know about the terrible conditions your people is living, the destruction and desolation that invade your cities and countryside.

Definitively the world must claim for this cruel war against the people come rapidly to an end. However, peace may be lasting and firm only if it is based upon justice. And justice in this situation means that Sri Lanka government finally recognises the right of Tamil people to choice what kind of state does want to live in, even if its decision favours an independent state. Peace must be based upon the right to each people to practice its own values, culture, language and traditions, with no any limit more than those accepted by the international community.

This commonwealth of civilised nations has to extend the expressions of solidarity with the Tamil people, isolating all those forces, both in and outer Sri Lanka, that show reluctance to recognise the legitimate rights of this people, standing exclusively in the use and abuse of force to keep their neo-colonialist interests.

Dear friends,

Let me again repeat my message of solidarity with your self-sacrificing people. I'm sure that at the final stage of this heroic struggle justice and freedom will prevail for Tamil Eelam.

Thank you

Britain is ready to mediate

COLOMBO, Sept 27 (Reuter) - A senior British politician said on Friday his government was willing to mediate a settlement between the Sri Lankan government and separatist Tamil rebels locked in a fierce battle in the island's north.

Liam Fox, under-secretary of state at the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, told a news conference that London could play a third-party role to end the island's 14-year-old ethnic war if invited by Colombo and rebels.

``We are happy to offer our service in any conflict where both parties want us to be involved. But only when both parties are committed to a peaceful settlement is it possible for a third party to come in and be of use," he said.

Fox is on a five-day visit to the former British colony, less than a month after British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind came here for talks with government leaders.

He is due to travel to the northern frontline town of Vavuniya on a fact-finding mission during his stay.

He said the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who are seeking a separate homeland for minority Tamils in predominately Sinhalese Sri Lanka's north and east, were unwilling at present to lay down their arms and agree to talks with the government.

``I think it is quite clear at the moment the LTTE are not in a position where they wish to negotiate a political settlement," he said.

Fox said the government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga had not entirely closed the door to negotiating an end to the war, which Colombo says has killed more than 50,000 people.

"My assessment is that the government understands this is not something which can be purely settled in a military sphere and that at the end of the day there has to be a negotiated settlement to the problems that face Sri Lanka," Fox said.

"And I think that is a very useful start," he added.

Women against war and militarism

A 'Women for the Peace' activist at the procession calls for support and solidarity of women of all communities in Sri Lanka in their quest for peace.

"We mistrust the current use of peace slogans to fan war and ethnic hatred as we see them being part of the same old patriarchal militaristic machinery.

"We see the need to expand the network of female solidarity against war and reach out to the victims as well as those 'margins' in the peripheries who resist this horrible ethnic civil war; we can no longer be the 'silent witnesses' of their tragic experiences."

Why women in black? The need to come out in the street with our protest in black and silence, every week? month? "We express our protest against war, rape in war, nationalism, ethnic cleansing, arbitrary arrest, detention and disappearance of people.

"We wear black because we express our strongest indignation to those who take lives of others while we share the grief and sorrow of those near and dear once have been killed and we solidarise with the survivors and victims whose pain and suffering reflect the extent for cruelty entrenched in the social fabric. Black is our sign of resistance and sorrow.

"Our national call is for all non racist, non chauvinist and non sexist people to raise their voice for peace.

"Our silence is an invitation to women to reflect about themselves and about women who have been raped, rendered displaced and destitutes, others who have been tortured and killed in concentration camps, those who have disappeared or whose loved ones have been killed and houses bombed and shelled."

They reiterate their stand:-

"*Against war being waged in the name of community and nation

*Against all forms of ethnic, social and gender violence

*Against the overt use of war ideology to promote 'peace'

*Against war crime of rape and male violence against women

*Against misuse of refugees and civilian populations as war prey and revenge

*Against arbitrary and indiscriminate bombing and shelling in civilian areas

*Against misuse of women as military strategy and bombers for conquering territories and as ethnic cleansing

*Against propaganda that leads women from making children for 'patriotic causes'

*Against the policy of conscription and recruitment drives and particularly recruitment of children as war soldiers

*Against 'forced' eviction of communities from traditional areas of abode

*Against economic embargo as a policy affecting civil population and most all women, children and old people

*Against misuse of unarmed civilians in conflict zones and border villages as hostages and human shields

*Against arbitrary arrest, detention and disappearence of people."

Courtesy:
Weekend Express. 29th September 1996

REMEMBERING THE ULTRA-CHAUVINIST

A series of meetings have been held on 16 and 17 September by the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) to commemorate the 132nd birthday of Anagarika Dharmapala. Dharmapala was a Sinhala Buddhist supremacist who was active during the early part of the 20th century. Dharmapala was an effective and articulate exponent of Sinhala chauvinism based on the "superior" rights of the "Aryan" Sinhalese. In his preachings Dharmapala denigrated the non-Sinhala inhabitants of the Island and set in motion a vicious pattern which other Sinhala leaders were to follow. The myth of Duttagemunu was used by Dharmapala to celebrate the "Sinhala Aryans of yore uncontaminated by Semitic and savage ideas". In 1915 he directed his attack against the Muslims by calling them "an alien people (who) by Shylockian methods have become prosperous like the Jews".

PESSIMISM HAUNTS SRI LANKA

COLOMBO, Sept 22 (Reuter) - With the government's peace plan deadlocked and the military's offensive stalled, hopes have dimmed in Sri Lanka for an early end to the country's 13-year civil war, analysts and politicians said.

``I am pessimistic," said **Rohan Edrisinghe,** a lecturer on law at Colombo University.

``The only hope that we have now is the situation will get worse and the people will begin to realise that something hitherto unthinkable has got to be resorted to in order to reach a political solution," Edrisinghe told Reuter. The predominantly Sinhalese Sri Lankan military's push into the heartland of Tamil Tiger rebel territory on the northern mainland has been at a virtual standstill for nearly two months.

Neelan Tiruchelvam, fellow at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies and a member of parliament, said he saw no end in the near future to the current stalemate in the ethnic war.

``I don't see any breakthrough in the military operation. Unfortunately war has its own dynamics. Each party to a war wants to tilt the military balance in their favour. So it is an unending cycle," he said.

Tiruchelvam said a political solution was the only way to end the conflict, but politicians and diplomats said bickering by the ruling and opposition parties appeared set to scuttle the peace package proposed by President Chandrika Kumaratunga in August 1995.

Kumaratunga's People's Alliance (PA) government has a one-seat majority in the 225-member parliament. Since any constitutional change requires a two-thirds majority, it needs support from the main opposition United National Party (UNP), which holds 85 seats.

``It is impossible for the PA to get UNP backing for the package unless you dilute it to a useless level," said **Dharmalingam Sithththan**, a Tamil member of parliament who leads the People's Liberation Organisation for Tamil Eelam.

``Despite the soaring defence burden and inflation and suffering of the people from the war, PA and UNP are seeking petty politics in which national interest is lost," he said.

``The outlook is so bleak that I don't see any way out."

The peace plan suggests turning Sri Lanka into a union of regions and making it a federal state in all but name.

Victor Ivan, editor of Ravaya newspaper, said the UNP was bent on foiling the peace package, which would help unseat the PA from power in the next elections.

``They think the best thing to finish this government is to go against this package. The government will face a crisis without the package because minority Tamils and Muslims will be upset," he said.

Kumaratunga's government, campaigning on a peace platform, came to power with minority support in the 1994 elections, ending 17 years of uninterrupted UNP rule.

UNP General Secretary **Gamini Atukorale** said his party supported devolution but signalled opposition to a constitutional change to delete reference to Sri Lanka being a unitary state.

``The principle of an indivisible Sri Lanka should be respected and we are against any form of federalism," Atukorale said.

Diplomats said the recent establishment of commissions to probe abuses under past governments made it easier for the UNP to refuse cooperation for the package, which is now before a parliamentary select committee.

PA supporters also violently disrupted UNP political meetings this month to mark its 50th anniversary, they noted.

Edrisinghe said the package, even if approved, would not meet the aspirations of Tamil politicians, let alone the LTTE.

``There is nothing in the package to provide power sharing at the centre. If you are serious about devolving power to regions I think it is important that regions should have some political clout at the central legislature level," he said.

Your fate Too

- A. Jesurasa

You stroll back home
From the sea-beach
Or maybe from the cinema
Suddenly, a rifle cracks
Boots scamper away.
You'll lie dead
On the road
In your hand
A dagger sprouts
A pistol too may blossom
'A terrorist'
You'll be dubbed.
None
Dare ask questions.
Silence freezes.
But
Deep in the people's minds
Indignation bubbles up.

Translated by
A.J. Canagaratna

World Tamil Co-ordinating Committee, USA celebrates 10th anniversary. President Dr. Thanisegaram at the mike. Also in the podium is P. Nedumaran ►

உலகத் தமிழர் ஒருங்கிணைப்புக் குழு
WORLD TAMIL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
U.S.A

▲ *Cultural evening in Netherlands organised by the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation.*

▲ *Campaign demanding the release of Muralitharan, LTTE Swiss representative*

Thileepan remembered in Germany

Commemorating the martyrdom of the first woman LTTE fighter
The annual observance by the Tamil Women's Committee of the first Tiger woman fighter Lt. Malathi was held on October 6 in Paris.
Photographs show some of the items in the evening's programme.

Cultural evening of liberation songs organised by Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation, Berne, Switzerland - The procceds were in aid of Tamil war widows and affected mothers in Tamil Eelam

தியாகி திலீபன்
27
11
63
26
09
87

"Tiyagi" Thileepan who gave up his life in a fast unto death remembered in Switzerland.

Liberation Tiger Commanders Kumarappa and Pulendran and ten other Tigers remembered on thier 9th death anniversary at Berne, Switzerland on 28th September. Pictured are pupils of the "Thirukoneswara Nadanalaya"

Opening of Eelam House in U.K.

The first Eelam House in Europe was ceremoniously opened in London on 25th of August 1996 with the hoisting of the Tamil Eelam flag by Mr. Lawrence Thilagar, a member of the Central Committee of the LTTE. Large number of people were present at the ceremony.

Two minutes silence was observed to honour civilians and the Tamil freedom fighters who have been martyred in the Tamil Eelam liberation struggle. Mr. Lawrence Thilagar spoke on the significance of the Eelam House in U.K. and dedicated it to the heroic freedom fighters and to the Tamil people. He stated that the Eelam House belongs to Eelam Tamils and all were welcome to work together in this building to achieve freedom for our people.

Rev. Father S.J.Emmanuel who recently arrived from Tamil Eelam, spoke on the need for all Eelam Tamils to be united and stand by the liberation struggle, instead of looking through the fence and sitting on the fence, as Eelam Tamils are at critical junctures. Therefore unity is paramount. The hour has come for Eelam Tamils to determine their own political, economical and cultural future. He blessed the Eelam House and hoped it would become the official Tamil Eelam embassy in the foreseeable future and requested all to work towards it.

Rev. Father Emmanual addressed children separately in English, gave them a brief history of their mother Land and reminded them of the people of Eelam who suffer and struggle for freedom and better future. Rev. Father Emmanuel emphasised the need to learn one's own mother tongue and to be aware of their roots. This will help them to grow stronger and gain confidence.

(Speakers from left to right): Rev. Fr. S.J. Emmanuel, Mr. Lawrence Thilakar and Mr. Sarve

Another speaker spoke on 'death and life' in Eelam. He stated that in death Tamil Eelam people have life. He also described the daily life faced by our people under constant bombing and shelling. He further said that how the population of the peninsula became displaced three times within 10 months, living without water, food, sanitation, medicine, clothes and shelter. "Our people have become destitute by the Sri Lankan government's economic embargo. Chandrika has blinded the International community by banning foreign journalists. NGOs too are moving away due to intensive and indiscriminate bombing and shelling by the armed forces", he concluded.

EELAM HOUSE
SOLD BY

Mr. Sarva of the International Secretariat said the day will come when the Eelam House will function as the embassy of Tamil Eelam.

Finally Mr. Shanthan thanked everyone who helped the project to be successful. Traditional short eats and cold drinks were served. All who came made contributions to the Eelam House project.

THE TAMIL NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE

*This is an extract of an article by **Nadesan Satyendra** written in August 1993:-*

Tamil Eelam nationl leader Velupillai Pirabaharan

"Thiyagam" defies direct translation into English. The closest word "martyrdom", has too rough an edge to it. Thiyagam has a more rounded feel.

A thiyagi knows that he has not only a duty but also has the right to act. At the same time he knows that he has no right to the fruits of his actions. In the action lies the reward. A thiyagi knows that to seek a change without the willingness to suffer to bring about that change, is but to end up making impotent pleas for fair play and justice and issuing stultifying ultimatums without sanctions. **A thiyagi is no impotent pleader. He does not plead for fair play and justice. He demands it.** He does not beg for freedom. He is free. The cyanide capsule in the hands of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is evidence not of a simple-minded willingness to die but of a fierce determination that cries out "I will not lose my freedom except with my life"

It is this determination and this cry which has found an answering response in the hearts and minds of Tamil people everywhere, living today in many lands and across distant seas. It is this thiyagam, it is this willingness to suffer to bring about change, which has made Velupillai Pirabakaran and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam not only the leaders of the Tamil national liberation struggle, but also its undying symbols.

The words of Velupillai Pirabakaran uttered on the occasion of the "Maha Veerar Thinam" (Great Martyrs Day) in November 1992 bear repetition: *"The strength of our struggle arises from the fierce determination of our fighters. Their firm commitment and their courage to act without fear of death are the force and resource of our struggle. The whole world is providing arms to our enemy. We are not begging from the world. We stand firm on our own legs, on our own soil, with our own people and fight with our own hands. Since we are firmly rooted in our own strength we stand upright without bowing to the pressures of others. Today, our liberation struggle is situated in a complex historical juncture faced with new challenges and new crises. Our enemy having firmly closed the doors to peace, has embarked on a course of escalating the war.. We are nor warmongers who love violence. We want a permanent, stable and honourable peace. One day, when our enemy knocks at our doors for peace we will extend the hand of friendship."*

The Tamil struggle is no afternoon tea party. The new balances that are being struck in a multi—polar world are not without relevance to the struggles in Tamil Eelam. It used to be said that states have permanent interests but do not have permanent friends. This may be so even in the case of nations struggling to become states. 1

Sinhala-owned Sunday Times on Kumaratunge

"President Chandrika Kumaratunge is not sincere about devolution. She is only too keen to re-gather even the meagre powers devolved to the provinces and keep them concentrated within the executive ambit of the Presidency. She, therefore, practically serves the unitary character of the Sri Lankan state better than the polemics of her opponents. Her sincerity, applauded locally and internationally, seen in this light, boils down to mere lip service to the concept of regional autonomy."

(Opening paragraph by regular Columnist Taraki, Sunday Times,15 September 1996)

CEYLON WAS A UNITARY STATE BUT NOT SRI LANKA - WHY?

P. Varothayasingham

Ceylon was granted independence in 1948 under the Soulbury Constitution which conformed to the well established constitutional principle of separation of powers. Under this principle the state's three main powers were vested in three separate organs of the state. Legislative power is vested in Parliament, Executive power vested in a Cabinet of Ministers accountable to Parliament and Judicial power in an indepedent Judiciary. Though based on the Westminister model there was one major difference between the two systems. Much of Britain's Constitution is in the form of Conventions, Acts of Parliament and reported cases. With no formal written Constitution, the British Parliament is supreme and has the last word in any legislative matter in Britain. It can make or un-make any law. Not so in Ceylon.

Ceylon Parliament was a creature of the Soulbury Constitution under which it was granted independence. The inhabitants of the island through their representatives had agreed unanimously on this Constitution for governing the island. This Constitution made Ceylon into a unitary state and the minority communities agreed to this structure on account of the Article 29 of the Constitution which outlawed discrimination. The written Constitution being a higher form of law, the Law behind the law and the Basic Law of the country, afforded protection to all minorities by its Article 29 against the tyranny of the majority Singhalese. Article 29 also provided that the Constitution could not be amended other than by a Bill commanding the support of the two-thirds of the members of the House of Representatives. The Constitution may be changed, "most or all of it", using a two-third majority. After amendment(s) Parliament must still operate within the limits set by the amended Constitution.

"Most or all of it" meant that there was one article which cannot be altered at all without doing away with the whole Constitution and therefore only by throwing out the constitutional settlement reached at independence. Matters came to a head in a case that arose in 1964, the Bribery Commissioner vs Ranasinghe, which reached the Privy Council. Analysing the lawmaking powers of Parliament as contained in Article 29 of the Soulbury Constitution, their Lordships of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council stated that "Article 29 represent the solemn balance of rights between the citizens of Ceylon, the fundamental conditions on which they accepted the Constitution, and these are therefore unalterable UNDER the Constitution".

So, the Article 29 cannot be altered even with a two-third majority. All discriminatory legislation, including the Official Language Act, were voided by this Article. The only way the Singhalese could get rid of Article 29 was by getting rid of the whole Soulbury Constitution using a two-third majority. But, when they do that Celyon would cease to be a unitary state! Of course they will have to come up with a new draft Constitution but the problem lay in validating the draft Constitution, which would be impossible without agreement from all the people in Ceylon. A Constitution must represent the aspirations of all the people in a state.

Following the Privy Council pronouncement on Article 29 all the Sinhalese political parties were united in their condemnation of Article 29 and the Constitution. The SLFP-LSSP-CP Alliance led by Srimavo campaigned for the 1970 General Election asking the Singhalese people to give them the two-third majority. The General Election gave the Alliance a landslide victory - and they secured more than two-thirds of the seats in the House of Representatives. First the Upper house of Parliament (Senate) was abolished. Next the right of appeal to Privy Council was abolished. The Government declared that all elected members of the House of Representatives were concurrently members of a parallel body called the "Constitutional Assembly" and went about drafting a new Constitution.

The Federal Party originally attended the Assembly and proposed two amendments to the draft Constitution. One was that Ceylon should be a Federal Union of Linguistic States. The other was that instead of incorporating the Singhala Only Act, both Tamil and Singhalese should be made the official languages of Ceylon. Both amendments were rejected and the Federal Party withdrew from the Assembly.

Under the draft Constitution produced by the Assembly Ceylon was renamed as the "Republic of Sri Lanka". The issue here was how to validate the draft Constitution. In Britain which has no written Constitution, Parliament is supreme. By drafting a written Constitution the National Assembly in Ceylon had accepted that it was

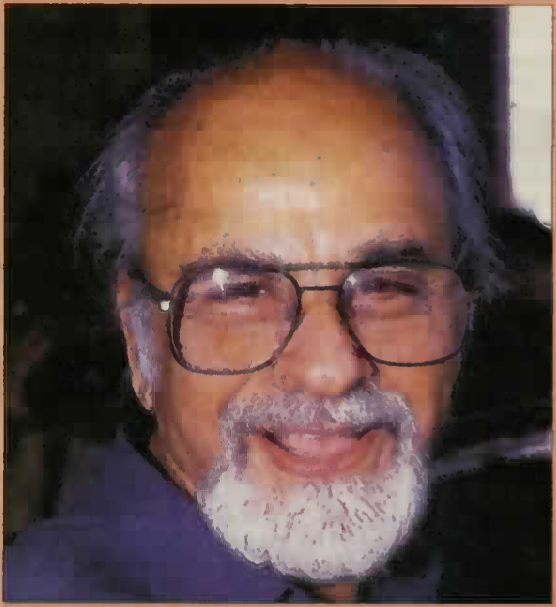
not supreme. It would be restricted by the draft Constitution after the latter is validated. The National Assembly had no power to validate the draft and in fact it would be illogical for the National Assembly to be restricted by its own creation! Validation has to be by the highest authority in the land, the people. Sovereignty lay with the people and the draft Constitution must be validated by the people in a referendum. This was never done, not for the 1972 Constitution nor for the 1978 Constitution drafted by the UNP government. Had there been a referendum then all Tamils would have voted against or abstained from voting. When the Soulbury Constitution was abolished the Tamils became free from the restrictions imposed by the constitutional settlement at independence and Ceylon lost its unitary status. The two invalid Constitutions since then have not affected the independent status of the Tamils nor the divided status of the island of Ceylon. Let us look at two recent international examples.

A draft of the South Africa's first post-apartheid Constitution was unveiled in July 1993 paving the way for an end to 350 years of white domination after the country's first all-race polls to be held in April 1994. This constitution would be temporary, to be replaced in 5 years by a revised more permanent arrangement. The draft provided for a bicameral parliament that would act as a constituent assembly to draft the future Constitution. The Assembly was to adopt the constitutional text by two-thirds majority within two years of parliament sitting, followed by a referendum to validate the draft Constitution.

In 1993 Russia led by Mr. Boris Yeltsin came up with a draft Constitution produced by its constitutional convention. Though approved by a large majority of the convention, the draft could not become the basic law (Constitution) of Russia. The draft, with 173 articles, was passed for further revision to the assemblies of the regions and the republics across Russia. This resulted in delay and extensive revisions. At least a third of the representatives from the regions and the republics - who were a dominant force in the constitutional convention - did not initial the draft, and even those who did made it clear that their assemblies were free to revise the draft radically. The revised draft was then put to the people of Russia for approval in a referendum on 12 December 1993 to be validated to become the accepted Constitution of the post-communist Russia.

Sri-Lanka never validated its draft Constitutions of 1972 and 1978. It is 25 years and some 100,000 human lives too late. It can never be put back together now. Ceylon's unitary status went with the abolition of the Soulbury Constitution - for good.

INDIA WILL NOT HELP SRI LANKA FIGHT TAMIL TIGERS



NEW DELHI, Oct 14 (AFP) - India will not help Sri Lanka fight Tamil Tiger separatist guerrillas, External Affairs Minister Inder Kumar Gujral said Monday.

"We have burnt our fingers once. We do not want to do it again," he told a seminar here on the country's foreign policy.

Gujral said he would visit Sri Lanka from October 24 as part of his efforts to boost relations with neighbouring countries.

But he added that there was no move to help Colombo fight the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which is campaigning for a homeland called Eelam in Sri Lanka's embattled northeast.

QUOTES FROM THE INDIAN PRESS

"India Today" of 15 September 1996, Comment titled "Dithering on Federalism"

"The original intention of the framers of the (Indian) constitution, as spelt out in the Objectives Resolution of 1946, was to create a lose confederation in which the states would 'retain the status of autonomous units'. But, after the trauma of Partition the following year, the emphasis of the founding fathers shifted from the strength of the units to the strength of the federation. The time is indeed right to revert to the Objectives Resolution of 1946 and confer greater autonomy on the states."

Army repression forces more Tamils to flee to India

Matthew Chance
9, Oct. 1996

RAMESWARAM, INDIA: The arrival in India of hundreds of Tamil refugees fleeing by boats from neighboring Sri Lanka is provoking concern that India might once again become embroiled in the island nation's bitter ethnic war.

Refugees crammed into fishing boats have been making the short but hazardous sea crossing to India's shore for several weeks now. They avoid Sri Lankan gunboats and Indian naval vessels to land on the long stretches of sandy coastline around the sacred Hindu temple town of Rameswaram, on India's southernmost tip.

``Our houses have been burned, our shops destroyed," says Joseph Anthony, one of the more than 1,200 refugees who has arrived in India over the past several weeks.

Most of the mainly Hindu Tamil refugees say they are escaping the ethnic Sinhalese Sri Lankan armed forces.

``The Army comes in and accuses our families of being Tamil Tiger terrorists. They beat us and arrest our sons. They will not listen to us when we tell them we are innocent. A strict curfew also means we cannot work or live normal lives, so we have to come to India," Mr. Anthony says.

Across the Palk Straits, which separate war-ravaged Sri Lanka from mainland India, thousands more Sri Lankan Tamils are waiting to come over.

Intense media coverage of the influx of Sri Lankan refugees is fueling concern among Indian Tamils about the plight of their Sri Lankan brethren.

``These people are our brothers and sisters," says V. Gopalswami, the leader of the recently formed MDMK party in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The party is hoping to capitalize on public sentiment by campaigning in forthcoming local elections on a platform of support for Sri Lankan Tamils.

V. GOPALSWAMI

``We cannot continue to watch them suffer at the hands of the Sri Lanka government. We should give them every assistance. After all, blood is thicker than water," says Mr. Gopalswami. He voices increasingly widespread sentiments once held by many of India's 55 million Tamils, who in the 1980s were passionately sympathetic to the Tamil Tiger cause of separatism in Sri Lanka. Then, the southern state of Tamil Nadu provided a base for the dissidents to wage war against the Sri Lankan Army.

While successive Indian governments provided arms and military training to the Sri Lankan rebels, Tamil Nadu politicians rode a wave of popular Tamil nationalism, fiercely critical of the mainly Buddhist Sri Lankan state.

The signing of the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Accord at the height of the civil war cleared the way for Indian troops to operate as peacekeepers in the north and east of Sri Lanka.

Although Indian troops were initially welcomed by the Tamil Tiger rebels, hostilities soon broke out. And despite nearly three years of fighting between the two forces, support for the rebels among the Tamils back in India remained strong; so much so that when India finally withdrew its peacekeepers in 1990, after losing more than 1,200 men, Tamil Nadu's then-Chief Minister, M. Karunaniddhi, boycotted the troops' welcome home ceremony.

``For the past five years, the issue of Tamil separatism has been sidelined, no politician could talk about Sri Lankan Tamils and have a hope of being supported. But now people are forgetting about Rajiv and are talking more about Sri Lankan Tamils. The refugees coming from Sri Lanka are rekindling some sympathy and with Karunaniddhi coming back to power earlier this year, there has been lots of speculation that history might be repeating itself."

'REFUGEE STATUS' FOR FLEEING TAMILS

MADURAI, Sept. 19. The State Government has formally accorded ``refugee status" to the Tamils fleeing Sri Lanka to reach the Rameswaram coast in Ramanathapuram district.

Official sources said a telex message to this effect has been sent to the Commissioner, Rehabilitation, by the Public Secretary, Mr. M. Devaraj. Apart from according refugee status, the Government seems to have decided to distribute the Sri Lankan Tamils, now housed at the Mandapam refugee camp, among the other camps in the State.

The refugee status will make the Sri Lankan Tamils eligible for a bi-monthly dole and provision of essentials at subsidised rates.

A cash dole of Rs. 75 will be paid for the first adult member of the family and Rs 60 for the other adults on a bi-monthly basis. Rice will be supplied for the refugees at a cost of 57 paise and sugar and kerosene at the prevailing PDS rates.

The Politics of Dislocation

"OUTLOOK" 11 September 1996

"The 1000-odd refugees are from the Mannar district right across the strait. The escalation of war in the region and the alleged wilful denial of food by the Sri Lankan Government is forcing them to cross the sea braving the Sri Lankan army, navy, LTTE, the Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy.

Refugees landed in Tamil Nadu

The movement from across the strait could set off a chain reaction.

And in the ensuing storm of accusations and counter-accusations, the plight of the refugees and their tales of unending woe get totally buried deep under. Most of the present refugees are from Pesalai Forest Hospital refugee camp in the army-controlled Mannar district of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan Government blames the LTTE for the exodus. "Tigers want to internationalise the domestic issue once again. Only mass exodus will turn the gaze of the international community towards our efforts in curbing terrorism," says a Colombo based Foreign Ministry spokesperson.

But the refugees blame the Kumaratunge government squarely for their present plight. Says Christoraj, a fisherman from Vangalai in Mannar district: "After every attack by the Tigers, we are beaten black and blue. Our boys are taken for interrogation on a regular basis and they simply vanish."

Tamil Nadu then becomes their natural place of refuge as it is only an hour's sail from their coast. Says Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi: "It is not that we are inviting them over here, but when they come here, seeking refuge we can't turn them back. It is our duty to take care of them." But the Government is terribly cut up with local fishermen for exploiting the goodwill and forcing mass exodus to the mainland.

The fishermen in turn blame the Tigers. Says M Devedas, Secretary, Rameswaram Motorised Boat Owner's Association: "The LTTE men force us to ferry those refugees at gun point"

But not a single refugee corroborates this theory.

The state intelligence authorities are also convinced that the Indian fishermen are lying through their teeth. "The Sea Tigers are in the east and in the north; the western boundary is under the control of the Lankan navy. Our fishermen enter international waters, evade the Lankan navy and bring their 'human cargo'."

DISPLACED TIME AND AGAIN

GENEVA, Sept 20 (AFP) - Some 2,000 Sri Lankans have sought refuge in southern India since the beginning of the week, a spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said Friday.

"They fled the north of the island because government forces have barred them for security reasons from fishing, and therefore they have nothing left to eat," the spokesman said.

The refugees have settled in camps managed by local authorities in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, she added.

The UNHCR said that the refugees have been displaced several times in recent years due to fighting, and who now find themselves without permanent homes.

Centre urged to stop 'genocide' of Tamils

'THE HINDU' 29 September 1996

"The worsening plight of Tamils at the hands of Sri Lankan Army, continued ethnic killings and the need for the Centre to immediately intervene and stop the 'massacre' were highlighted here today at a meeting organised by the Thalainagar Tamilz Sangham and International Integrated Tamil Society.

Participants narrated how the wrath of the Army following its defeat in Mullaitivu had been turned on the Tamil civilians depriving them of food and medicine and international aid agencies prevented from coming to the rescue of the Tamils.

Mr.K. Rajaram, former Tamil Nadu Minister, said that the State Assembly should be convened and a resolution adopted reflecting the agony of the members over the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka. The Government should forward the resolution to the Centre seeking its immediate intervention to stop the killing of Tamils.

Mr. Thiagu representing Tamizh Tamilzhar Iyakkam, called for lifting the ban imposed by the Centre on the LTTE in the context of the island Government's reluctance to do so.

Mr.Deivanayagam of Dravida Samaya Marumalarchi Iyakkam said it was painful to see the absence of any 'emotional outburst' in the State despite the continued killing of their brethren in Sri Lanka.

Mr.M.C. David, State Janata Dal General Secretary, Mr.M.Maitreeyan, State BJP General Secretary, Mr.R.Muthukumar, State headquarters Secretary of PMK, stressed that the need of the hour was to stop immediately the killing of Tamils in Sri Lanka."

Govt. backing for Tamil Nadu herbal petrol inventor

Ramar and Poonkani with Karunanidhi

RAJAPALAYAM, Sept. 19. Mr. Ramar, who shot into fame with the invention of ``herbal petrol," told presspersons here on Wednesday that the State Government had allotted a 20-acre site for him to start a farm to grow herbal plants whose leaves contained hydro-carbon and helped him produce petrol.

He said he was summoned by the Kamarajar District Collector, who told him that the Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, had issued an order asking him to allot a 20-acre site for setting up the herbal farm. The site where he had set up a make-shift laboratory would also be assigned to him and a ``patta" issued.

He said the Collector also promised that necessary protection would be provided to him. Policemen were guarding his house and anyone who wanted to meet him was frisked completely.

Meanwhile, a function was held at Srivilliputtur to felicitate Mr. Ramar at the Peenington Auditorium there unde the presidentship of the Distric Revenue Officer, Mr. Veera Shanmu gasigamani. Mr. Govindarajalu, Sub Collector, Mr. Sankaranarayanan Tahsildar, and others spoke.

Mr. Ramar said he would set up plant to make ``herbal petrol" in tw weeks after getting permission fron the Central and State Governments. A first he would produce 50 litres o petrol a day. In three months the pro duction would go upto 300 litres a day In six months it would touch 10,00 litres a day. The ``herbal petrol" contained only one per cent of sulphur anc hence there was no wastage and the emission of smoke was also less.

He said ordinary petrol woulc vapourise in 20 minutes, but ``herba petrol" would vapourise in 15 minutes Only. 10 gm of herb was needed tc make one litre of petrol. He would distribute the seeds of the herbal plant tc farmers and buy all the herb producec in the farms by them.

Herbal fuel to be patented!

The finding of a high school dropout from Tamil Nadu that water can be turned into an inflammable material by mixing it with a herb discovered by him has been buttressed by experiments at the National Chemical Laboratory, Pune, confirming that the material had properties similar to kerosene. The oil produced in the process developed by 35-year-old Ramar Pillai belongs to the family of mineral oils and its properties closely resemble those of kerosene. The patent facilitation cell under the Department of Science and Technology is making preparations to get the process patented and plans are afoot to set up a 300-litre-a-day pilot plant to manufacture the fuel.

"I don't want anyone to hijack the gift"

There's nothing distinctive about Ramar Pillai's appearance. But the 34 year old villager from Kamarajar district in Tamil Nadu shot to fame with his invention of the sensational `herbal petrol'. Ramar Pillai spoke to Outlook at his wellguarded residence-cum-laboratory at Idaiyankulam village. Excerpts:

Have you always been interested in science?

I had no special interest in science during my school days. In 1987, I went as a cook with a school excursion team to a nearby village. There someone carelessly threw a cigarette butt and a heap of herbs burst into flames. That kindled my latent interest in the herb. I felt I had to identify it.

How did you isolate the herb?

Every morning I'd go out in search of the herb. I would pluck various plants and try them out. My family lost faith in me. They thought I had gone mad. But I persisted. Finally, I found the right plant.

Can you reveal the name of the plant?

Once the patent is registered, I will do it. Till then it will remain a secret. So will my process of converting water into petrol. I am not unwilling to share my knowledge. I do not want someone to commercially hijack a wonderful gift, which rightfully belongs to the people of Tamil Nadu.

How did you get in touch with the Department of Science and Technology?

I had never heard of the department. I had sent a detailed dossier to the PMO and they directed the DST to look into the matter. The significant fallout of that was the invitation from the Chief Minister.

What role did your foster-sister Poonkani play in your research?

I'd give her 30 per cent of the credit. It was she who discovered that citric acid from lime and common salt act as catalysts and accelerate the conversion.

*Courtesy: **Outlook***

Sri Lankan Govt. Leases out Oil Storage Tanks to Multi-nationals

From Amit Baruah
COLOMBO, Sept. 29.

The Sri Lankan Government has begun a process to lease out oil storage tanks to multinationals in the northern port of Trincomalee, a senior Foreign Ministry official said.

Both the Government of India and the Indian Oil Corporation expressed their interest at various times in the storage facility at Trincomalee, considered a ``sensitive" subject in the 1980s.

A source in the Indian High Commission confirmed that New Delhi retained its interest in the facility and the IOC had been in touch with Sri Lankan authorities.

The Sri Lankan official told this correspondent last Friday that a process of inviting tenders to lease out some of the oil tanks had been initiated, but no decision had been taken as yet.

A local newspaper reported that a three-member Cabinet-Appointed Tender Board (CATB), headed by Mr. Jaliya Medagama, Secretary (Power), had been set up along with a technical committee to evaluate inquiries from foreign companies. According to the newspaper, a Singapore-based multinational had expressed an interest in leasing the storage tanks as had some Korean companies during the President, Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunga's visit to South Korea.

FLASHBACK

1961

What C.Rajagopalachari wrote in 1961

Indian statesman C.Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) who was later to become India's first Governor General, wrote the following article in the SWARAJYA of April 29, 1961, under the headline: THE CEYLON STRUGGLE.

He says. inter alia: The question is whether the Tamil-speaking people are to be treated as equals or not. Equality will be ensured under a federal regime. The unitary government is necessarily leading up to place them on an inferior level... It is interesting to note that 35 years after he wrote this, Sinhala opinion still remains hardened on the issue of doing away with a unitary form of government.

Here is the full text of the article written by Rajaji:

"The Ceylon Tamils (who are old Ceylonese and are as attached to their mother island as any other citizens of Ceylon) are asking for a federal form of government in which the Tamil-speaking population of North and East may have autonomy subject to the Federal government of all-Ceylon. This will enable them to take pride in Ceylon nationality, without any bar-sinister of inferiority.

The language issue is merely an outer symbol of the competition between the two nationalities. It is a battle between communities not at all a battle of cultures or languages. Neither culture nor language is in danger. Either can stand on its own strength and is not capable of being extinguished or even hurt in a substantial degree. The question is whether the Tamil-speaking people are to be treated as equals or not. Equality will be ensured under a federal regime. The unitary government is necessarily leading up to place them on an inferior level. This is the more unjust because the progress so far achieved and the present status of Ceylon as a whole depended not a little on the patriotic services of the eminent Tamilians of Ceylon. The refusal to grant equal status on a federal basis to the Tamil population amounts to ingratitude.

> ***The unitary government is necessarily leading up to place them (Tamils) on an inferior level. This is the more unjust because the progress so far achieved and the present status of Ceylon as a whole depended not a little on the patriotic services of the eminent Tamilians of Ceylon. The refusal to grant equal status on a federal basis to the Tamil population amounts to ingratitude.***

"Let not the Tamil Northern and Eastern population be confounded by superficial readers of news in India with the people of South Indian origin who have migrated to Ceylon when the plantations needed hard labour and who have settled down in and around the plantations as permanent but yet unrecognized citizens of Ceylon. They are in an entirely different group. Their quarrel is a different one.

"Any sympathy from South India extended to the original Tamil- speaking people of Ceylon, who are fighting a tremendous battle for autonomy within a federal regime, can be easily mistaken for a Tamil conspiracy to bring Ceylon sovereignty and its integrity into jeopardy. That is the reason why South Indian leaders have been patient, and have not given too swift expression to their feelings of sympathy with those who fight a just battle in Ceylon on the language and federalist issues.

The present Ceylon Government party has been for sometime past pretending to see a great conspiracy between South Indian Tamils and Ceylon Tamils which of course is mere myth born of an inferiority complex.

The question of direct action and the advisability of continuing it is quite a different question and should be judged entirely by the leaders of the movement (Rajaji's article, it would be remembered, was written in the wake of the Satyagraha campaign of 1961 in the northeast organised by the Federal Party which paralysed civil administration in the areas for several months - Ed. HS) one who is at a distance and who is a votary of peace may be inclined to advise compromise if it could be had on honourable terms. It is hard to believe that reason will not ultimately prevail.

We all hope in India, who have seen the lady-Premier of Ceylon, that she will bring her best emotions into play and succeed in controlling the extreme elements on the Sinhala or Buddhist side (whatever name we may give it) and bring the protest movement to a suspension on honourable terms."

Would Sri Lankan President's Three-Pronged Approach Ever Deliver?

By Francis Jeyapal and M.C. Spencer

It was reported that President Chandrika Bandaranayake Kumaratunga's (CBK) People's Alliance Government of Sri Lanka had a three-pronged (trident) approach to resolve the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka; namely, war, political package and development. This trident approach from CBK is reminiscent of Britannia - the female warrior carrying a trident personifying power.

WAR (AGAINST TAMILS)

The war is one of the prongs of the trident to defeat the LTTE and thereby subjugate the Tamils of the North and East. How else could the difference in the mechanisms, tactics and strategies of a conventional land, sea and air warfare waged against the Tamils he explained, when compared to the methodology used to quell the Sinhala rebellion in the south in recent times.

Many Tamils are being herded like cattle and pursued like wild animals by helicopters notwithstanding the many times or how long they have been running for their lives. By way of trampling the fallen people, the Sinhalese military has imposed restrictions on almost every conceivable item of necessity for ordinary life? even the bare essentials of water, food and medicine. Such inhumane mistreatment of a populace is proof that the Tamils of the North and East are viewed as aliens who do not belong to the Sinhala-Buddhist body politic of Sri Lanka

"POLITICAL PACKAGE"

Chandrika Kumaratunga

Based on the preceding 40-year history of the conflict? this so called political package has been and continues to be the "foreplay" used by the government to stimulate the gullible international community and aid donors into turning a blind eye whilst letting lose full wrath of the military machine in an all-out war on the Tamil people. The SLFP opposition in Sri Lanka had seventeen years to consider the paramount problem of the Sri Lankan Tamils' self-determination issue. It took them over a year after elections and a further four months after the failure of the third round of peace talks with the LTTE to present the later-much-watered-down political package.

The controversies and uncertainties surrounding the devolution proposals" as regularly lashed in the popular press, are enormous. The requirement of a Sri Lanka-wide referendum as the final step embodied in the package lends credence to the argument that it was never intended to be truly implemented. Prof G.L. Peiris is continuing to pretentiously espouse an evolved political package abroad in stating, "This government has recognised that the past political package is inadequate, the degree of devolution contemplated in our package of reforms is simply not compatible with the concept of a Unitary State. The government has evolved a reform package providing for a new configuration of the Sri Lankan State". According to a recent Sunday Times article by Taraki, even the ex-Tamil militant groups' view is that the Select Committee and the legal draft are dead. Nonetheless, the "political package" has been and still is paradoxically a hollow corner-stone of CBK's farcical political edifice for the anguish, pain and suffering of mainly the Tamil people of Sri Lanka

DECEITFUL PROPAGANDA (NOT DEVELOPMENT)

The term "development" used by the President, however, is not in keeping with the other two prongs of the trident; it would be, if it truly meant the development of the war effort. Considering the lengths the government is prepared to go to achieve its objective by hook or crook, deceitful propaganda may in truth be substituted in place of the word development. The fallacy of citing development as the third prong stands exposed in the light of the fact that almost all the borrowed money is being put into the war. Hence genuine development or rebuilding is impossible in an ongoing state of war.

Earlier, the government, citing Jaffna rebuilding as its first priority, attempted to raise "the-most-urgently-needed" funds from foreign donor countries under the guise of development, further stretching the false propaganda approach. It is noteworthy that the recent food aid worth Rs 19.8 million granted by the United Nations World Food Program has been allocated on a priority basis to "drought-stricken" Vavunia (South), Polannaruwa, Kandy and Matara - Sinhalese areas, whilst the 13-year war with all its concomitants continues in the North and East!

CBK, prior to coming to power, in interviews, direct interactions with LTTE and other utterances including election promises gave the impression that she believed the LTTE had a just cause and that there could be no solution without dialogue with them. It was this stand of CBK that made the people of Sri Lanka including many hopeful Tamils to elect her with an unprecedented 63% of the votes cast. There were people who argued that CBK all along had an out-right military solution in mind and that the government simply orchestrated the entire fiasco of a peace negotiation with the LTTE. A closer look at the subsequent events unfolded in the Sri Lankan political scene would, in no uncertain terms, indicate that deceitful propaganda is being continually organised in implementing the military option with the delusion of forcing the Tamils to accept the hegemony of the Sinhala-Buddhists.

The media censorship laws act as a complementary tool in orchestrating the deceitful propaganda of the government. And, a campaign of disinformation and misinformation in tandem constantly attempts to portray the LTTE as terrorists. "Heartless terrorists who are threatening to destroy our loved ones; now, come and unite around the lion flag; it's time we showed our true guts and save the country for our families. . ". This quote is in a government's appeal to enlist Sinhala officers to its Navy in a full-page advertisement on a daily newspaper. The educational qualification requirement in the advertisement read: "Minimum 4 passes at the GCE O/L examination including Sinhala language..." Subsequently, Women for Peace Movement in Colombo condemned the government for wearing many masks and for its hypocritical abuse of Sri Lanka's history and politicisation of Buddhism to condone and legitimise the use of violence to protect or further the cause of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism.

A recent *Asiaweek* Magazine article, despite containing several controversial issues, had this to say about the government's efforts to pin another label on the LTTE as narcotics traders.

"Indeed some governments see Colomho as playing up the drug issue to elicit aid and cooperation for its anti-LTTE struggle. One Colombo-based diplomat said that the government was looking for any hook to get us more engaged and that they were after the international community to provide the silver bullet....".

AN EMERGING NEW TREND?

Abraham Lincoln, one time President of the USA, has been quoted as saying, "Governments can fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time but not all the people all the time". There are indications of a new trend where Sinhalese intellectuals, academics and scholars are waking up to realities particularly after the Mullaitivu debacle, though the realisation has apparently not reached the grass-root level as yet.

For the first time, in one's living memory a Buddhist monk, the Ven. Maha Kal Kadavale Punniyasara Thera - chief priest of Kokkavalla Vihara, has come out with the view that as of ancient times power-hungry Sinhalese politicians have been and still are the cause of the deterioration of the country. He states that he has other Sinhalese people with him willing to support the just cause of the Sri Lankan Tamils. Mr Ronnie De Mel, a veteran long-standing Sinhalese politician, is of the view that the PA Government should recommence negotiations with the LTTE with third party mediation.

Mr Ajith Rupesinghe, a leading sociologist with a Masters degree in Political Science from the University of California and presently the National Organiser of the National Peace Council in Sri Lanka, in one of his articles published in Sunday Observer provides an analysis of the actual Sri Lankan situation. Mr Rupesinghe, when discussing about the breakdown of peace talks, states as follows:

"At first, the government messed up the opportunities that had opened up with the election of the PA government and the President on the firm and clear pledge of bringing about a negotiated political settlement. The military establishment, with the connivance of India, worked effectively to sabotage the peace process. The lack of seriousness and professionalism on the part of the executive offered fertile soil for these forces to manipulate the situation. These were the main factors that led to the breakdown of the last round of peace negotiations".

Contrary to what the Sri Lankan government has been propagandising to the world, the LTTE are not to be blamed, at least entirely, for the breakdown in the peace negotiations after all; and, now coming from a Sinhalese academic should mean much. Mr Rubesinghe further adds, "The indiscriminate bombing and shelling of civilian populated areas in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu provokes concern that the "Sath Jaya" military campaign is designed more to terrorise the population into submission and to pamper the wounded egos of deflated Generals and restore the battered image of a besieged government than to serve a rational military objective".

CONCLUSION

There are some to whom any war is gain and not a means but an end itself. Ironically, in this numeracy game of democracy, the Sinhala Buddhist nation as a whole, being the majority, will have far more to lose both in quantity and quality in terms of life and property. It is time the Sri Lankan government realised that it is fighting an unjust war with the LTTE, a totally-dedicated and self-sacrificial group of warriors, especially after the Mullaitivu debacle and that CBK's three-pronged approach - war (against Tamils), "political package" and deceitful propaganda (not development) - is deeply flawed and a delusion of grandeur at best. The longer this trident approach stays in place, deeper a wedge is being driven between the two communities. Is it not time that the Sinhala pristine Theravada Buddhist majority nation of Sri Lanka went back to basics to discover the true Buddhist and humane approach to amicably resolve the conflict?

The Sri Lankan government and its Sinhala masses must wake up from their past and present delusions of grandeur and accede to the traditional homeland of the Tamils in the North and East. Territory and/or complete autonomy must be traded for real peace; if not, the price would continue to be paid in both life and property, through our own folly, to make the first world richer while Sri Lanka deteriorates into the "fourth-world". A UN sponsored plebiscite wherein the Tamil diaspora forced to emigrate and now scattered over the world should also have a say in the interests of real justice. But, sadly, to come to that point more people in Sri Lanka will have to continue to suffer and sacrifice more of their limbs and lives as reported in Australia's SBS news (26.09.96) which said, "The government sources admitted that their main aim is to kill as many Tamils as possible".

History repeats itself because we do not learn and also we forget the lessons of history, be it in the collective or individual life. May we echo the feelings and thoughts of the more reasonable Sinhalese Buddhist minds and reiterate that CBK and cohorts should not lose touch with sanity and reality but pursue the course of peace with justice and honour for all humans (mindful of the place for all living creatures in true Buddhism) in the present Sri Lanka before a qualitative might may effect, in furtherance of the cause of the Tamils' right to self-determination, a disproportionate loss or damage to the quantitative right of a contrived democracy that has been always leaning towards an underlying sham (an) theocracy.

War Hit Sri Lankan Economy

by Amal Jayasinghe

COLOMBO, Oct 2 (AFP) - Renewed bloodshed in Sri Lanka has made the recession-hit tourism sector more nervous while the drawn-out war adds to unprecedented pressure on prices, analysts here said.

Reports of over 1,000 deaths on both sides during a battle to capture the final bastion of Tamil Tiger guerrillas in the north of the country last week has raised fresh worries for the economy, private analysts said.

Sri Lanka's budget for this year is hinged on an ambitious privatisation plan and an escalation of fighting may scare off potential foreign investors, a senior broker at the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) said.

However, the CSE which has hit rock bottom in the past two years saw a slight improvement thanks to foreign institutional investors picking up local blue chips at bargain basement prices.

"The slight improvement in prices has nothing to do with the fundamentals of the market," the broker said. "The local investors are staying away but a few foreigners are encouraged by the depreciating rupee."

The Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) said at the weekend that it suffered huge losses because local rupee had fallen by 15 percent since January last year and raised fuel prices by as much as 30 percent.

"We are mindful of the fact that any upward revision of fuel prices will further affect the cost of living of the people," a spokesman for the CPC said, adding that another increase may be necessary if the present exchange rate trend continues.

Sharp increase in the price of fuel has compounded fears of galloping inflation and poor growth of an economy already dented by the seemingly unending ethnic war which has claimed more than 50,000 lives since 1972.

The number of foreign tourists visiting the country has dropped by 30 percent in the first half of the year while industrial out put dropped 50 percent due to prolonged power cuts.

Tourism was hit mainly by the January bombing at the Central Bank where 91 people were killed and the train bombing near here in July when 70 people were killed. Both attacks were blamed on Tamil Tiger guerrillas.

Private analysts firm Crosby Financial Holdings forecast a dramatic increase in inflation due to bad weather, failure of crops and electricity shortages in the first half of the year.

Crosby said Sri Lanka's growth was expected to be at 3.3 percent this year, down from 5.5 percent in 1995 and 5.6 percent in 1994. But officials insist they expect a 4.5 percent expansion of the economy, arguing they expect a slight recovery in the second half of the year.

Inflation was earlier expected to average at 15 percent this year, in sharp contrast to last year's actual figure of 7.7 percent according to Central Bank figures.

Last month the government increased the price of wheat flour by 21 percent and two months earlier put up cigarettes and liquor by 15 percent and allowed bus operators to raise fares by as much as 33 percent. Telephone tariffs were increased by 50 percent.

President Kumaratunga said the country could not afford subsidies because of heavy spending to battle the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the island's north-east.

Defence expenditure has risen to an estimated 50 billion rupees (nearly a billion dollars) from a budgeted figure of 38 billion rupees, official figures show.

Crosby said it was unrealistic to expect a revenue of 21 billion rupees (420 million dollars) from the sale of state enterprises this year and the inability to raise that money will widen the budget deficit to 10.8 percent of GDP.

Sri Lanka's privatisation authority has raised only 2.9 billion rupees out of an expected 21 billion rupees so far.

The government is expecting the bulk of privatisation revenue to come from the sale of the national airline Air Lanka and the telecom company, the Sri Lanka Telecom.

Sinhalese M.P. fears political victimisation by Sri Lanka

VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLITICAL RIGHTS OF AN OPPOSITION MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF SRI LANKA BY THE SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT.

OPEN APPEAL by
Dr.Jayalath Jayawardena, M.P.

"I, Dr.Jayalath Jayawardena, M.P., appealing to you, to intercede on my behalf with her Excellency Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President in a case of political victimization in which my Human Rights and freedom of expression are in imminent danger of being violated.

"Since my election to Parliament two years ago, I have been active especially into the areas of Human Rights and humanitarian assistance to the internally displaced in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka and very often was critical on the extension of the Emergency Regulations despite no signs of any possible settlement of the war in sight. During the recent past, I have been very critical on occasions of mishandling of the on-going ethnic conflict, when such actions led to serious violations of Human Rights of the innocent people, living in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and very often they were subject to brutal torture and killing. I am actively in liaison with people who have been displaced. I advocate the fact that Sri Lanka belongs to all communities and all citizens irrespective of their cast, creed or religions should have equal status and equal rights.

The end result of my being a spokesman for preserving Human Rights, I have become a political victim under the present government. I am not only politically victimized, harassed and intimidated, but about to loose my Human Rights and Political Rights.

"THE SRI LANKAN GOVERNMNET IS ON THE MOVE TO IMPRISON ME INDEFINITELY, VIOLATING ALL ACCEPTED NORMS OF LAW AND NATURAL JUSTICE BASED ON UNDATED, UNSIGNED ANONYMOUS PETITION.

"Already the International Bar Assocation and it's Human Rights Institute whose President is President Nelson Mandela has taken up the matter and notified the President of Sri Lanka. It's Vice President has stated in his letter that single me out for the framing of a criminal charge would amount to a gross misuse of the machinery of the Administration of justice.

"So many local and International Human Rights Organisations, Religious Organisations, NGOs, Professional Bodies, individuals have taken this serious matter very positively and notified their protest.

It's my fervent belief that all this intimidation is to silence me from speaking on behalf of the thousands of innocent civilians living under the clutches of long drawn ethnic, civil war in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka and deter other front line workers of opposition party from going about their legitimate business of constructively criticising the present government.

I AM APPEALING TO YOU TO MAKE YOUR STRONG PROTEST ON MY BEHALF WITH THE PRESIDENT CHANDRIKA KUMARATUNGA (FAX NO: 94-1-446657 OR 94-1-333703) TO DESIST FROM THIS UNETHICAL AND UNJUST ACT AGAINST A HUMAN RIGHT ACTIVIST AND HER POLITICAL OPPONENT.

"Show your solidarity with a outspoken advocate of Human Rights in Sri Lanka. It is a fact and it is time to act and request from her to stop harassing and intimidating Opposition Members of Parliament. Please come forward to protect Paliamentary Democracy in Sri Lanka.

"Political violence is raising It's ugly dangerous head in Sri Lanka. If this situation prevails unchecked, it will soon not be possible for any citizen to freely engage in his own matters in Sri Lanka. This will definitely become a major threat to the community at large.

"PLEASE CONTACT ME ON FAX. NO: 252088 FOR ANY CLARIFICATIONS.

"PERHAPS THIS MAY BE MY FIRST AND LAST NOTE. MY LIFE IS IN GREAT DANGER. I CAN BE SUBJECT TO TORTURE. STATE TERRORISTS CAN MAKE ME DISAPPEAR.

"CERTAINLY YOUR PROTEST WILL HELP ME TO PROTECT MY LIFE. STAND TO PREVENT POLITICAL VICTIMIZATIONS, VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA."

GUILTY BUT STILL IN SERVICE

Over 100 Sri Lankan police officers found guilty of various offences including abduction and torture continue to be members of the force. According to the Attorney-General's Department, the 'offenders' include three Deputy Inspectors-General (DIGs), ten Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) and forty Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs). Some have even been promoted after having been found guilty.

Desperate appeal by Sri Lanka for blood donations

Wounded soldiers in the govt. offensives

COLOMBO, Oct. 2 (UPI) Sri Lanka faces a severe shortage of blood to treat casualties of a recent government offensive on the separatist rebel stronghold of Kilinochchi, health officials said Wednesday.

Sri Lanka's blood supply dropped from 2,500 pints to just 450 pints during lst month's eight-day military campaign, Dr. D.D. Wijewickrema, secretary to the Government Medical Officers Association said.

All routine surgeries at Colombo's National Hospital have been canceled this week as a result of the shortage, Wijewickrema said.

On Tuesday night, Sri Lankan President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga appealed to all healthy Sri Lankans to donate blood to treat the wounded soldiers, adding her voice to an earlier appeal by the country's medical community.

"Our soldiers are fighting bravely... They are making enormous personal sacrifices for the people of Sri Lanka to live in peace and harmony," the president said in her statement.

"It is indeed a duty cast on all peace loving people to respond and volunteer to donate blood. This is the least we can do to help our soldiers," she said.

In response to the request, more than 300 people came to Colombo's leading blood bank and by Tuesday evening, blood supplies had risen to 1,100 pints.

Sri Lankan government forces launched an offensive last month to recapture Kilinochichi from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

DEHIWELA BOMB BLAST: A COVER UP?

Ajith Rupesinghe a Sinhala political scientist has implied that the bomb blast in Dehiwala in the wake of the Sri Lankan army's worst defeat in thirteen years could well have been a Government attempt to cover up the defeat. According to Rupasinghe "The Mullaitivu debacle has provided indisputable proof of this fact which the Dehiwela bomb blast cannot cover up - whomsoever may be responsible for this monstrous act. The indiscriminate shelling and bombing of civilian populated areas in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu provokes concern that the ``Sath-Jaya'' military campaign is designed more to terrorise the population into submission and to pamper the wounded egos of deflated generals and restore the battered image of a besieged government than to serve a rational military objective." According to the acting Australian Consul in Sri Lanka, Ms Jane Ogge, "bombing targets by Tamil rebels were chosen to damage the Sri Lankan economy" and the Tamil rebels "rely on international support, financial and moral". Therefore the implication is clear that the Dehiwela bombing of a passenger train (which was not an economic target) was the work of somebody else! This has given rise to speculation that sections of the Sri Lankan political establishment anxious to continue with the war may, have played a role in this bombing.

SRI LANKA FAILS TO ATTRACT NEW RECRUITS

Sri Lanka's latest campaign to recruit soldiers to strengthen its armed forces depleted by desertions and casualties has met with little success despite the involvement of over 7,000 local government officials in a nationwide programme. The military's daily recruitment advertisements in local newspapers have made little impact. Nor have the appeal to chauvinism yielded results. On 18 August 1996, the "Lankadipa" a Sinhala newspaper carried an advertisement calling upon the "brave sons of Duttuegemunu lineage" to join the navy - Duttugemunu is a mythical Sinhala king who had brought the Island under Sinhala hegemony 2,000 years ago by defeating the Tamil king Ellalan.

NO CHARGE AGAINST "LTTE'S INTERNATIONAL INTELLIGENCE CHIEF"!

56-year old Dharmalingham Ramalingam arrested in February this year by the Sri Lankan police and accused of being "the international intelligence chief of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam" has been released by Colombo's Chief Magistrate, Munidasa Nanayakara. No charges were brought against the accused.

Dharmalingham , a senior civil servant was arrested on 9 February by police who claimed that this arrest led to the discovery of a cache of weapons hidden in a Buddhist temple in Narehenpittiya. According to police the weapons were found in a room that the suspect rented in the temple when he was is Colombo.

Dharamlingham, now a free man, has written to the Public Service Commission expressing his desire to continue in his job as an Assistant Commissioner of Labour from which he was suspended following his arrest.

"SURESH, A PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE AND A POLITICAL PRISONER" SAYS THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF JURISTS

Manickavasagam Suresh (40), the coordinator of the World Tamil Movement held without review in a Toronto jail because of his political activities and links to the Tamil liberation movement-(The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam-LTTE) has been declared a prisoner of conscience and a political prisoner by the American Association of Jurists. The resolution recognising Suresh as a prisoner of conscience and a political prisoner was passed unanimously by the General Assembly of Branches of the American Association of Jurists (AAJ) in Havana, Cuba on 11 July 1996. The President of the AAJ, Felipe Ledus has written to the Canadian Prime Minister in early August communicating this decision. In a letter to Suresh's lawyer, the General Secretary of the AAJ, John Philpot, has stated that the resolution recognised Suresh as a prisoner of conscience and a political prisoner, disapproved the legislation used by the Canadian Government to detain Suresh and sought to promote the use of this resolution by other organisations as well.

Amnesty International is also poised to declare Suresh, a political prisoner. In a letter dated 16 September addressed to Suresh's lawyer (Ms. Barbara Jackman) Amnesty International states that it would consider Mr. Suresh to be a political prisoner if he continues to be detained in Canada on the basis of his political activities. Amnesty argues that Suresh is being denied his right to a fair trial and that Canada's immigration law has resulted in people being "detained in contravention of international human rights standards". The letter signed by Saul Takeneshi, Amnesty's Refugee Officer concludes: " Our organisation is gravely concerned about the application of this provision in Canadian Law (as well as the provision itself) and we are considering conducting in-depth research of the actuation." The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) is behind Suresh's year long incarceration.

"20,000 Sri Lankan boys are prostitutes"

From Dominic Kennedy in Stockholm

Wealthy widows from Europe are adopting teenage boys in Sri Lanka for sex by showering them with expensive gifts, according to a human rights organisation.

The women, in their fifties and sixties, are known as "godmother" to the boys' unsuspecting families, who see them as a godsend to alleviate their poverty.

The growing problem in a country where 20,000 boys are prostitutes, mainly working for homosexuals, was highlighted as the 130 nations represented here at the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children agreed on a eight-page declaration.

It is difficult to do anything about it when it is a boy with a wealthy woman," Lakshman Jayakody, a Sri Lankan Cabinet Minister, said yesterday. "They get the boys and give them everything."

Indra Nilaweera, director of the Samurdhi Women's Organisation in Sri Lanka, said one destination favoured by European widows was Hikkaduwa, a southern beach resort where sex tourists stay with local families for about £2 a night. The women befriend boys aged between 16 and 19 hawking shells or ornaments and stay in the teenagers' homes, with their parents trust, and ask if their sons could sleep in the same room.

"In our society it is accepted that grandparents sleep with their grandchildren and nothing happens," said Ms. Nilaweera. "[The parents] are mainly illiterate and are ignorant of these happenings."

The boys are rewarded with gifts of watches, fine clothes, radios and televisions while the women are staying with the families - usually for about three months during the northern winter. On their return, the widows send monthly cheques to the boys and, eventually, an air ticket to join them in Europe - often Germany and France.

After six months in Europe, the boys return, adopting Western ways. The widows buy land in the boys' names and build pleasant homes for their Sri Lankan lovers, with a home costing as little as £8,000. They then bring their widowed friends during the holidays and the boys are expected to recruit sexual partners for them, too. "These rich women have not intention of getting married. They are sexually exploiting poor children."

CAMPAIGN AGAINST STATE TERRORISM IN SRI LANKA

CASTIS, Church of the Ascension, Royce Road, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5AL

Dear Hot Spring,

We recently had the pleasure of listening to Garth Hewitt's new song on the Navaly outrage of last year. It was especially written for a recent commemorative service at St.Martin's in the Fields, near Trafalgar Square. A very well written and moving piece. On only one hearing, I still have the chorus "And I want to cry out", running through my head.

As a member of CASTIS - after watching the Navaly Video last year - I also wrote a piece to express my disgust - a copy of which I sent to Garth Hewitt at once. I enclose a copy, should you wish to use it! It has been read out at a number of meetings - as well as a recent service we also had at the church of the Ascension in Manchester. As you will know, this is the church at which Viraj Mendis found sanctuary before being deported back to Sri Lanka.

Good luck with your magazine - which is very impressive.

Sincerely,
Mark Abraham

NAVALY

So how could it be
that the people in the North
were forced to hide in their churches,
that orders on the radio
and leaflets from the sky
said they must all congregate
in their places of worship
to shelter from the carnage
that soon would fall from above?

And how could it be
that the same people
who had sent out the orders,
the government itself,
then bombed and strafed them
where they took sanctuary,
whole families together
killing them in each others' arms,
tearing them limb from limb?

And how could it be
that even for those who survived
there were no proper medicines
for wounds or amputations,
and all because the government
conducted an embargo
on drugs and other basic goods,
starving out the very same people
it claimed it was there to help?

And how could it be,
that there was also an embargo
on the presence of reporters,
for the same government decreed
that any press would undermine
the confidence of its soldiers,
and so the only tales we heard
were full of the same distortions
as the papers on the Island?

And how could it be
just because the West had plans,
and all because of profit and power,
that we in the rest of the world
were kept in ignorance, were told nothing,
while those who fought for freedom
were left without friends or supporters,
were isolated and described
as monsters and fanatics?

So how then could it be?
How could any of this
make any sense at all?
And you who keep repeating every day,
This is the world and how it is,
always has been, always will,
I ask of you, so how then can this be
that we must justify such things
simply because there seems no other way?

- Mark Abraham

Letters

A Challenge to Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister

Sir,

In his TV-interview on British Channel-4 at 8.00p.m. on Thursday August 15, Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar quoted the exchange of over 40 letters between his President and the LTTE Leader during the Peace Talks of January to April 1995 as evidence that it was due to LTTE's inadequate response that the talks failed. I hereby openly challenge him to publish those letters in the form of a booklet with the same diligence as the grossly misleading 26 - page pamphlet "JAFFNA SITUATION: The International Media Verifies" which was brought out last month on his Ministry's initiative. An early publication of the relevant letters will reveal to the world who is bluffing whom, as well as objectively assist both parties in averting the same pitfalls in any future peace talks.

In the same interview he also said that the LTTE had been targeting and killing civilians in large numbers throughout the 13-year old ethnic war. I hence challenge him to also publish all facts related to this allegation, with statistics and any legally acceptable evidence, to substantiate himself.

Yours faithfully,
Prof.Kopan Mahadeva,
Century House, Birmingham, B23 5XA,
August 30, 1996.

out, so that the whole area could be productively bombed and strafed, with soldiers, Tigers and civilians dying by the scores together? Who among your brigadiers will dare to refer to the death of a few hundred soldiers as "a minor military setback"?

Your Excellency, I believe that you want peace in Sri Lanka, and I know that it must be difficult with the Tigers on one side and your generals on the other. Both sides have been accused of intransigence. And yet, each side says it is the other that refuses to negotiate. I think you should put to the test the alleged intransigence, at least of the LTTE. It is not inconceivable that, despite the unfulfilled promises, they trust the sincerity of your desire for peace. And they may also reasonably consider that once you leave office, someone truly bloodthirsty will take your place, and all hope of a peaceful settlement would be lost. There is, therefore, genuine pressure on the LTTE to negotiate with you while you are still available. I implore you to take advantage of this opportunity. As for your military leaders, they should not have to be reminded that you remain their Commander-in-Chief. Regardless of what they desire to do, if they are proper soldiers, they must obey you first.

I therefore respectfully request, Madam President, that you stand up and assert yourself! You cannot dictate to your people how to vote, but you can tell your military what and what not to do. I suggest that you concern yourself later with proposals and elections and other things out of your control. Do the right thing militarily and the world will be at your feet.

What is the right thing? This is just my opinion. Heed it and consider it for whatever merit it has.

First: stop providing open targets for the LTTE. Get your soldiers off the roads and out of the camps that are just death-traps for many of them. If the LTTE has nothing to shoot at, they'll stop shooting. As for their destruction of non-military targets, the LTTE cannot be deterred from such activity by your own military doing the same. Wide-spectrum attacks on Tamil villages and round-ups of Tamil people just lead to further civilian deaths and provoke the LTTE to retaliate, as numerous previous exchanges of this kind have demonstrated.

Second: display your courage by inviting Prabhakaran to meet with you. It is your prerogative as President to do this. On frequent occasions, you have publically expressed your dislike for Prabhakaran's personality. You may even find "dislike" to be too mild a word for your judgement of his character. But his likeability to you should not be an issue at this time. As President you are responsible for the future of your country, and you must put aside your personal pride when countless human lives are at stake.

For months, the LTTE has stood ready to meet with you, provided only that you treat them as equals. They together with you hold the fate of Sri Lanka in their hands. This may not be a happy fact, but it is nevertheless a fact from which you cannot hide your people's eyes.

My third and final request is that you start mediated peace negotiations with the LTTE immediately. Tamil people all over the world, including LTTE leaders and their supporters, have been calling precisely for this: NOT for more arms to the Tigers, NOT for the destruction of your government. Both you and Prabhakaran have been advised that you cannot negotiate from a position of weakness. As long as you both have that attitude, you will never get anywhere at all. The war will drag on for years and years, a few people will become rich because of it, but many thousands more will be killed. You know by now that the Tigers cannot easily be beaten. If you continue to pursue a military solution to the conflict, the war will continue to escalate, and when you leave office you will leave at best a deeply embittered nation behind you.

Would it not be worth great personal sacrifice to bring a genuine peace to your war-torn country? Sometimes it seems as though you have just given up; sometimes it seems as though the warmongers and war-profiteers have got you where they want you: trapped and helpless as the soldiers in Mullaitivu. Please don't give up! Make the killing stop! Think of the millions who voted for you who want to see you succeed in delivering the peace you promised them. It will take hard work, sleepless nights, and no end of frustration and pain, but I know you can endure all that for the cause of your people.

Call your soldiers to safety, meet face-to-face with your adversary, oppose warfare with all your might, and with all your will, make peace happen. Follow this course, and I, for one, will stand among your supporters.

Sincerely,
Margaret Trawick
Massey University
New Zealand

IN MEMORIAM

Viswalingam Shanmugvadivel,

Rtd. SPHI of Valvettiturai.

Born: 31.07.1922 Departed: 28.9.1990

Sadly missed and fondly remembered on the 6th anniversary of his passing away by his loving wife Ramaganthi; children Amirthakala (Canada), Ratnakumar (Yogapuram), Swarnakala, Nandakumar (UK), Premkumar and Uthayakumar (both of Germany), Sivakumar and Sugirthakala (both of UK), sons in law Subashchandrabose (Canada), Ponnambalam (Switzerland) and Gobiratnam (UK); daughters-in-law Chandraleka (Yogapuram), Atputhamalar (Madras), Yogamathi and Yogasarojini (both of Germany) and Helen (UK), grandchildren Kavitha, Janitha, Jawagar, Sitharth, Aravinth, Anusha, Kousigan, Shobana, Pradipa, Thushyanthini, Priyanthini, Shanmugapriyan, Satheesan, Shamini, Prashanthan, Nivedita, Ainkaran, Nishanthan, Mahison and Cheran.

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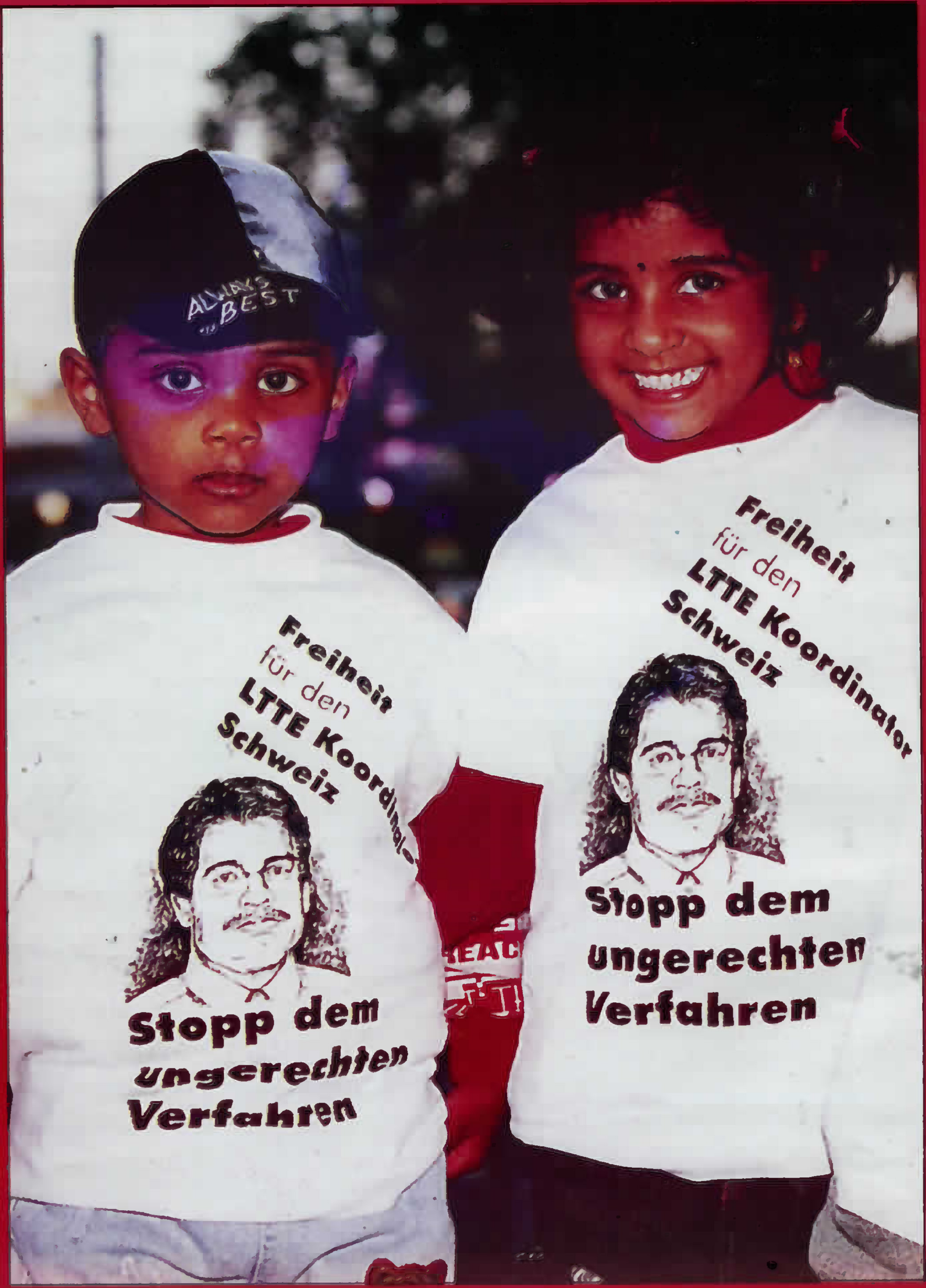
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